OPERA SYNOPSES

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March 17. 1955

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First published April 1913
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
182 *High Holborn, London, W.C.*1
Reprinted January 1919

New Edition Published November 1920
Reprinted: September 1922; *November* 1923; *January* 1926

Revised and enlarged edition published
October 1928

Further enlarged edition published
November 1934
Reprinted: March 1936; *January* 1940; *February* 1943

New edition, reset and further enlarged, May 1944
Reprinted: January 1945; *May* 1946; *January* 1947 &
April 1949; *January* 1952; *December* 1953

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Dewey Decimal Classification: 702.08

Made in Great Britain. Printed by Morrison & Gibb, Ltd.,
London and Edinburgh

PREFACE

A KNOWLEDGE of the standard operas is as essential nowadays as a knowledge of the classics of literature. Each sheds its influence upon the other, and the line is continually being crossed between the adjacent fields. Plays of Shakespeare, like *Othello* and *Merry Wives* ; novels like Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*, all reappear in musical setting. The general reader, therefore, whether he frequents the opera or not, cannot overlook this phase of artistic expression.

Opera Synopses will be found to include a careful selection of the ' grand,' ' romantic,' and ' light ' operas. It is not all-inclusive, as a list anywhere near complete would require a book four or five times the present dimensions. But it does endeavour to include all the operas actively in the *répertoire* of the producing managers within the last few years, and those which are most frequently cited and consulted.

For ease of reference, preference has been given to the English title, except in such instances (for example, *Il Trovatore*) where the opera is best known under its foreign title.

J. W. M.

NOTE TO NEW EDITION

IN this new edition the opportunity has been taken to include synopses of the comic operas of Sir William Schwenk Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. These are inserted by permission of Miss Nancy McIntosh, the owner of the copyright of Gilbert's works, and of Messrs Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

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AÏDA

Romantic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book by Antonio Ghislanzoni. Written for the Khedive of Egypt, and first produced at Cairo, December 24, 1871.

SCENE : Memphis and Thebes.

TIME : When the Pharaohs held sway in Egypt.

CHARACTERS

THE KING OF EGYPT [Basso].
AMNERIS, *his daughter* [Contralto].
RHADAMES, *a General* [Tenor].
RAMFIS, *the High Priest* [Basso].
AMONASRO, *the King of Ethiopia* [Baritone].
AÏDA, *his daughter, a slave* [Soprano].

Soldiers, Courtiers, Citizens, Tire-women, Dancers, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Aïda " (pronounced " I-ee-dah ") is one of Verdi's most brilliant operas, and has remained continuously in favour with the public. The story, which is full of colour, has an ancient Egyptian setting, being a romance woven around a beautiful slave-girl, who later proves to be the daughter of a rival king.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. Interior of the Egyptian King's Palace, at Memphis. The High Priest, Ramfis, delights the warrior Rhadames by informing him that Isis, the goddess, has decreed that he shall lead the army against the Ethiopian enemy. Rhadames is passionately in love with Aïda, the slave, and sees in this prospective victory an opportunity to obtain her from the King as his bride. But Amneris, the King's daughter, who now enters, has long loved the young soldier. As he is cold to her, she begins to suspect the truth, and she jealously watches Rhadames

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and Aïda when the slave appears. The King and his court enter, and Rhadames is formally invested with the command against the Ethiopians, who have advanced upon Thebes. All rejoice except Aïda, who knows that her lover is to meet her father, the rival king, in battle.

Scene 2. The Temple of Ptah. Ptah is the War-god of Egypt, and this short scene is occupied with the consecration of the arms of Rhadames.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Apartments of Amneris. The princess has heard that Rhadames is returning victorious from war, and, desirous of winning him by her charms, she orders her women to deck her in her most gorgeous attire. Aïda enters, and Amneris tricks her into revealing her love for the Egyptian warrior by falsely announcing that he has fallen in battle. When Aïda's grief betrays her secret, Amneris cruelly taunts her.

Scene 2. The Entrance to Thebes. Pharaoh summons his whole glittering court to do honour to his conquering Commander. The troops enter in formal review, and Rhadames is borne in in triumph, on the shoulders of slaves. The princess crowns him, and the King asks him to name his own reward. The captives of war are brought forward, and the populace demand that they shall be put to death. Aïda recognizes the conquered King as her father, but he conceals his true rank. Rhadames now asks as his boon that the lives of the captives may be spared. The King grants his request, and in addition bestows his daughter's hand upon him and proclaims him heir to the throne.

ACT III

A Night Scene on the Nile. Amneris, accompanied by the High Priest, goes to pay her vows to Isis on the evening before her marriage. Aïda follows secretly, to meet Rhadames for the last time. Her father finds her there and urges her to betray to him the movements of the Egyptian army, but she will not do so. Amonasro hides on the approach of Rhadames, and from the warrior's conversation with Aïda learns that which he wishes to know. The captive King now plays a bold stroke by presenting himself to Rhadames in his true rank, and urging him to espouse

the cause of Ethiopia. Aïda's hand is promised as his reward. Rhadames will not yield to the temptation, and while they parley Amneris comes from the Temple to denounce them. Rhadames urges the father and daughter to flee, but himself remains to submit to the guards of Ramfis.

ACT IV

Scene 1. A corridor in the Palace. Amneris has repented her action against Rhadames, and now seeks to save him. She tells him that Aïda's father was killed in the flight, but that Aïda herself still lives. If Rhadames will renounce her, Amneris says that she will obtain the pardon of Pharaoh. Rhadames refuses, and the enraged princess tells him to go to his doom. But when the tribunal of priests decree that the soldier shall be entombed alive, as the penalty for his supposed treason, Amneris turns upon them in redoubled fury.

Scene 2. The interior of the Temple, showing the crypt below. While the priests and priestesses perform the ceremonial temple service above, Rhadames is seen in the shadowy vault, resigning himself to death. Aïda now steals to his side. She has come to die with him. The vaults are closed up with stones; they sing together a last farewell to life and love, and perish in each other's arms; while above them the penitent princess kneels in prayer.

L'AMICO FRITZ

Sentimental Opera in Three Acts. Music by Pietro Mascagni. Book by Suaratoni, after the story by Erckmann-Chatrian. First produced at Rome, 1891.

SCENE : Alsace.

TIME : 1832.

CHARACTERS

FRITZ KOBUS, *a rich bachelor* [Tenor].
DAVID, *an old Rabbi* [Baritone].
FREDERICO, *friend of Fritz* [Tenor].
HANEGO, *friend of Fritz* [Tenor].
SUSEL, *a farmer's daughter* [Soprano].
BEPPE, *a gipsy* [Soprano].
CATERINA, *a housekeeper* [Contralto].

ARGUMENT

In this good-humoured opera of rural life in Alsace before the Franco-Prussian war the chief characters are members of a colony of prosperous Alsatian Jews who, while loyal to their ancient faith, have adapted themselves to their environment, and have acquired much of the temperament and most of the habits of genuine Alsatians. The cherry-picking duet in Act II is perhaps the best-known number.[1]

ACT I

A room in Fritz's house. It is his fortieth birthday, and he is entertaining some friends to dinner. Among them is Rabbi David, a keen and pertinacious matchmaker. Susel, the young daughter of one of Fritz's farmer tenants, arrives, and presents him with a posy of flowers. Observing the effect of Susel's innocent charms upon Fritz, the Rabbi chaffingly offers to lay a wager that the inveterate bachelor will soon enter the married state. Fritz takes up the wager, and stakes one of his best vineyards upon it that his friend is wrong.

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

ACT II

The garden of Susel's father's farm. Fritz comes to the farm, ostensibly to pay a visit to his tenant and to see how the crops are looking. Susel climbs a ladder leaning against a cherry-tree, and pelts Fritz with cherries, to his no small delight. Later Rabbi David appears, and appals him with the news that he has hit upon a highly suitable husband for Susel.

ACT III

A room in Fritz's house. He is in a state of strange agitation, and cannot imagine why. To him enters the wily Rabbi, with the announcement that all the arrangements for Susel's wedding will soon be complete. Fritz flares up, and says he will not allow it to take place. Susel arrives, but, being questioned concerning her projected marriage, bursts into tears. Fritz's efforts to console her soon bring about a perfect understanding between them. And the good-natured Rabbi, having won his wager, declares that the vineyard shall be his wedding-gift to Susel.

ARMIDE

Romantic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Christopher W. Gluck. Book by Quinault, founded upon Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered." First produced at the Académie Royale de Musique, Paris, September 23, 1777.

SCENE : Damascus and Environs.

TIME : The First Crusade, A.D. 1098.

CHARACTERS

ARMIDE, *a sorceress* [Soprano].
PHENICE, *her friend* [Soprano].
SIDONIE, *her friend* [Soprano].
HIDROAT, *King of Damascus* [Baritone].
ARONT, *his chief of staff* [Basso].
RINALDO, *Commander of Crusaders* [Tenor].
ARTEMIDOR, *a crusader* [Tenor].
UBALDO, *a knight* [Baritone].
A DANISH KNIGHT [Tenor].

Demons, Naïads, Knights, Courtiers, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Armide" is a legendary episode connected with the Crusade under Godfrey of Bouillon. His chief officer falls under the power of a beautiful sorceress. The opera, recently revived, is one of the oldest now in répertoire and is considered to be Gluck's masterpiece.

ACT I

The Palace of Armide. The Princess Armide is famed both for her beauty and her magical powers. She has remained unwed, although her uncle, Hidroat, the King, is desirous for her to choose a husband. But she cannot free her mind from the thought of Rinaldo, the victorious Crusader. At every new word of his conquests her heart is torn by hatred of him as an enemy of her country and love of him as a hero. Tidings are received that the Saracen host is at last victorious in a battle, but this is disproved by a later messenger and the arrival of Aront's army, which has again suffered defeat. All swear vengeance upon the Christian army.

ACT II

An Enchanted Garden. Rinaldo, the Crusader, while wandering in the desert, suddenly finds himself in an enchanted garden, conjured up by the wiles of Armide. Naïads rise up before him and sing him to sleep. While he is reclining in slumber under a bower of roses the sorceress advances towards him with drawn dagger. At last she has her country's enemy in her power! But the sight of the man of her dreams once more kindles love in her heart; the sorceress is lost in the woman, and she clasps him in her arms.

ACT III

The Palace of Armide. Again in her palace, Armide is torn among the mingled feelings of love, hatred, pride, and remorse. Instead of striking her enemy she has yielded to him. She summons before her the Demon of Hate, who warns her that for this indecision Rinaldo will yet escape her. Instead of serving her fury, this only redoubles her love, and the Demon in anger disappears.

ACT IV

The Enchanted Garden. Rinaldo remains under the spell of the sorceress. The Crusaders, alarmed by his absence, send Ubaldo and a Danish knight in search of him. At their approach Armide bars their path, but is compelled to fall back powerless before a consecrated sceptre borne by Ubaldo. Other visions appear at Armide's command, but are dissipated by the sceptre.

ACT V

The Palace (sometimes combined with the Garden scene). Armide conveys her lover to the palace and seeks to entertain him by ballets and tableaux. He forgets his past life under the influence of her spells. She leaves the room for an interval, and Ubaldo and the Danish knight enter, carrying the sceptre and a highly burnished shield, which when held up before Rinaldo reveals to him the warrior he formerly was. Roused to action by this vision, he grasps his sword just as Armide returns. She implores him to remain with her. When he refuses, and marches forth with the Crusaders, she sets fire to her palace and perishes in the flames.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

[*Il Barbiere di Siviglia.*] *Comic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Gioacchino A. Rossini. Book by Sterbini, founded on a comedy by Beaumarchais. First produced at the Argentina Theatre, Rome, February* 5, 1816.

SCENE : Seville.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

COUNT ALMAVIVA [Tenor].
FIGARO, *the barber of Seville* [Baritone].
DOCTOR BARTOLO, *a physician* [Basso].
BASILIO, *a music teacher* [Basso].
ROSINA, *a ward of Bartolo* [Soprano].
BERTHA, *a duenna* [Contralto].
FIORELLO, *the Count's servant* [Baritone].
AMBROSIO, *the Doctor's servant.*

Musicians, Citizens, Guards, etc.

ARGUMENT

" The Barber of Seville " is a light opera of more than usual interest. It was written by Rossini at top speed in less than three weeks, but is the only one of his works which has persisted continuously in répertoire. While it has not the grandeur of his " William Tell," it is a little masterpiece of its kind.

ACT I

Scene 1. A Street in Seville. Count Almaviva, who has fallen in love with Rosina, the ward of Dr Bartolo, goes to sing a serenade beneath her balcony. While there Figaro, the town barber, " perruquier, chirurgeon, botanist, and horse-doctor," a fantastic, officious fellow, comes along, and the Count prevails upon him to aid in this adventure. At this moment Rosina emerges upon the balcony and succeeds in conveying to the Count that his attentions are not unwelcome, but that her guardian is a jealous tyrant who is trying to seize her property.

When she disappears the barber suggests that the Count should disguise himself as a soldier, armed with a faked billeting order, and thus gain entrance into the house.

Scene 2. A Room in Bartolo's House. While Rosina is deploring her imprisonment and promising herself to lead her guardian a merry dance Bartolo enters. He himself wishes to marry his ward, and invokes the aid of Basilio, the music-teacher. While the two men go to draw up a contract Figaro enters and Rosina entrusts him with a letter to Lindoro (the name assumed by Almaviva). The doctor returns and accuses her of writing letters. At this point the Count staggers in disguised as a drunken soldier. An amusing series of incidents follows among all the principals, including the wily barber. An officer enters and arrests the Count for disorderly conduct, but on privately learning his true rank releases him and arrests the doctor instead.

ACT II

Music Room in Bartolo's House. Count Almaviva returns to the doctor's home, this time disguised as a music-master, sent in place of Basilio, who is supposed to be ill. Bartolo views him with suspicion, and, to prevent his being alone with Rosina, orders Figaro to shave him (Bartolo) in the same room. Rosina enters, and the strange combination proceeds amusingly. At this juncture Basilio appears, but is bribed to pretend that he is really ill. During the music lesson the two lovers arrange to elope at midnight, being aided by the tricks of the barber. But Bartolo finally suspects a plot, and rushes out to complete the marriage contract in favour of himself. The others also hasten away, and a violent thunderstorm breaks. At its conclusion Basilio brings the notary with the marriage contract, but the Count and Figaro intercept them and have the document changed in the Count's favour. The two lovers are united and the wrath of Bartolo is appeased by a present of Rosina's coveted property.

THE BOATSWAIN'S MATE

Humorous Opera in Two Acts. Music by Ethel M. Smyth. Dramatized by the Composer from W. W. Jacobs' story of the same name. First produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, January 28, 1916.

SCENE : England.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

HARRY BENN, *ex-boatswain* [Tenor].
NED TRAVERS, *a discharged soldier* [Baritone].
MRS WATERS, *landlady of " The Beehive "* [Soprano].
MARY ANNE, *maid at " The Beehive "* [Mezzo-soprano].
A POLICEMAN [Baritone].

Farm-labourers, etc.

ARGUMENT

The composer has followed Mr Jacobs' popular story as closely as the exigencies of opera will allow, and the music is cleverly adapted to the theme.[1]

ACT I

Outside a little Country Inn, " The Beehive." It is a summer evening, and Harry Benn, an ex-boatswain, is vainly wooing the widowed landlady. As he does not appear likely to be successful, he persuades Ned Travers, a discharged soldier on the tramp, to aid him in carrying out a plan to prove to Mrs Waters the value of male protection and assistance about the place. Travers is to break into " The Beehive " that night, when Mrs Waters will be alone in the house. Benn is to remain in the garden in hiding, and when Mrs Waters screams he is to rush in and knock down Travers, who is to escape. Travers exacts from Benn a signed statement that it is all a joke, and hurriedly departs as Mrs Waters is seen approaching. She dismisses Benn and proceeds to close " The Beehive " for the night, her firm handling of slightly inebriated yokels who wish

[1] My thanks are due to Dame Ethel Smyth and to her publishers, Messrs J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

to be served with drink showing that she is very well able to look after herself.

ACT II

"The Beehive" Kitchen, 2.30 A.M. Travers cautiously enters the kitchen, and is stealing upstairs when a sudden noise and gleam of light cause him to descend rapidly and slip into a cupboard. Mrs Waters comes on the scene carrying a gun. She locks the cupboard door and threatens to shoot the supposed burglar, who at last owns up and pushes the paper under the door. Mrs Waters liberates the prisoner and declares that Benn shall have a lesson, and their disappearance upstairs is followed by the sound of a shot. Benn rushes in as the landlady runs downstairs screaming, and learns that she has just shot a burglar. She will not permit him to go upstairs, but says the man is dead and the affair must be kept quiet. The ex-boatswain collapses when told to dig a grave in the garden, and is ordered off to bed. He goes, but only to return almost immediately with a policeman, to whom he has surrendered himself. At this moment Travers reveals his presence in the scullery by upsetting some crockery, and Benn takes him for a ghost. Mrs Waters, however, explains that he is a man who asked for a job on the boatswain's own recommendation. She pooh-poohs the story of the murdered burglar, reminding Benn that she has often warned him against drink, and as Travers backs her up, he concludes at last that this is the explanation. The policeman is more persistent, and at last Mrs Waters loses patience and turns them both out of the inn. She then gives Travers some breakfast, coupled with good advice, and he, in turn, proceeds to make love to her, with far better effect than his late accomplice. She is attracted by his audacity, and before he leaves promises to go for a walk with him in the evening. When she is alone she reflects with pleasure that life and love still offer her their attractions, and catching up a hand-mirror to study herself she begins to dance to her reflection, while Travers, unseen by her, looks in at the window, grinning. The amazed maid appears in the doorway and straightway begins to dance too, but Mrs Waters catches sight of her and sternly bids her get to work. The landlady then runs upstairs, and as she passes the window Travers ducks down out of sight.

LA BOHÈME

[*The Bohemians.*] *Romantic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Book by Giacosa and Illica, after Henri Murger's "la Vie de Bohème." First produced at the Teatro Regio, Turin, February* 1, 1896.

SCENE : Paris.

TIME : 1830.

CHARACTERS

RUDOLPH, *a poet* [Tenor].
SCHAUNARD, *a musician* [Baritone].
MARCEL, *a painter* [Baritone].
COLLINE, *a philosopher* [Basso].
BENOIT, *a landlord* [Basso].
MIMI, *a flower-girl* [Soprano].
MUSETTA, *a grisette* [Soprano].
PARPIGNOL, *a toy-vendor* [Tenor].
ALCINDORO, *a wealthy Parisian* [Basso].

Serjeant, Guards, Grisettes, Students, Children, Waiters, Citizens.

ARGUMENT

"La Bohème" is a picture of happy-go-lucky artist life in the Latin Quarter of Paris, with its lights and shadows, comedies and tragedies.[1]

ACT I

A Garret occupied by Four Bohemians. Rudolph, a poet, Schaunard, a musician, Marcel, a painter, and Colline, a dreamer, live together in a Parisian attic in a state of chronic poverty, yet in perfect harmony and good-fellowship. The poet and the painter are discovered, when the curtain rises, sitting in the bare and comfortless room, both cold and hungry. They feed one of Rudolph's manuscripts to the stove in the effort to extract a little warmth. Enter Colline, also to warm

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

up, followed by a boy bringing in fuel and materials for a feast. While they are overjoyed at this windfall, Schaunard arrives with a wonderful tale of how he has lined his pockets and thus can afford to give the spread. All fall to with gusto, but at this moment Benoit the landlord arrives seeking to collect his long-overdue rent. They ply him with wine until he begins to tell risky stories, when they pretend to be greatly shocked and thrust him out of the door. The rent money is divided for a further carouse in the Latin Quarter. Rudolph alone remains, under a plea that he wants to finish some writing. Presently a knock is heard. It is Mimi, a pretty neighbour of theirs, who comes to ask for a light for her candle. She departs, but soon returns, saying that she has dropped her key. Rudolph aids her to look for it and both candles are extinguished. The poet finds and pockets the key. They relate to each other their varied experiences, and decide to cast their lots together. They depart to join the other Bohemians, singing "Love Alone."

ACT II

A Public Square in the Latin Quarter. The four friends are spending Schaunard's money right and left. Rudolph buys Mimi a hat, and all seat themselves at a *café* table and order lavishly. While they are dining, Musetta, an old flame of Marcel's, enters with a wealthy admirer, Alcindoro. Musetta no sooner sees Marcel than she tries in every way to attract his attention, and also to get rid of her aged suitor. She finally sends the latter out to buy her a new pair of shoes, under a pretext that her old ones hurt her feet, and then rushes over and embraces Marcel. The Bohemians find that they have spent all their money and cannot pay the dinner bill, but Musetta tells them not to worry, that she will add it to her own and leave it for Alcindoro to pay. All disperse as a party of guards comes by, and Alcindoro upon returning finds a bill of such huge proportions that he collapses in his chair.

ACT III

At a Gate of Customs. It is still winter, and the customs officers examine the passports of all who enter the city. Mimi,

who is suffering from consumption, comes to the gate to ask for Marcel, who is doing some work hard by. When he appears she tells him that she is miserable as she cannot live with Rudolph and also cannot live without him. They have quarrelled. Marcel goes to summon Rudolph, and Mimi hides behind a tree. The poet tells his friend why he has left Mimi. She coughs and reveals her presence, and he takes the sick girl in his arms. Meanwhile Marcel becomes jealous of Musetta, whom he accuses of flirting in the inn.

ACT IV

The Garret as in First Act. Marcel and Rudolph are at work when the other two Bohemians arrive with materials for a scanty dinner. They make merry, however, over the repast, pretending that it is a banquet. Musetta comes in, saying that Mimi is extremely ill. All hasten to the aid of the invalid. They place her upon a cot, and rush out to pawn their clothes, if necessary, to buy her food and medicines. Rudolph alone remains, and the two lovers are again reconciled and resolve never to part thereafter. The others return, bringing various things, but Mimi is beyond aid. She expires while Rudolph kneels weeping by her bed.

THE BOHEMIAN GIRL

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Michael William Balfe. Book by Alfred Bunn. First produced at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, November 27, 1843.

SCENE : Presburg and Vicinity.

TIME : Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

COUNT ARNHEIM, *Governor of Presburg* [Baritone].
THADDEUS, *a Polish exile* [Tenor].
FLORESTEIN, *the Count's nephew* [Tenor].
DEVILSHOOF, *chief of the gipsies* [Basso].
CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD [Basso].
ARLINE, *the Count's daughter* [Soprano].
BUDA, *her nurse* [Soprano].
THE GIPSY QUEEN [Soprano].

Gipsies, Huntsmen, Officers, Guests.

ARGUMENT

" The Bohemian Girl " is the romantic story of a high-born child kidnapped by the gipsies, whose after-life is an intermingling of court and rustic environment. It has remained one of the most popular of the lighter operas.

ACT I

Count Arnheim's Estate. A group of huntsmen await the coming of their master the Count, who is going hunting. He appears leading by the hand his little daughter, Arline, to whom he bids farewell, as the hunters set forth. After they have gone and Arline's nurse has taken her away, Thaddeus, a Polish fugitive, rushes in seeking to escape the Austrian soldiers. A gipsy band next comes upon the scene, headed by Devilshoof, who induces the exile to join them. His belongings are taken away from him, and he is given a ragged gipsy dress, which, however, serves him as a disguise. Florestein, the Count's nephew, now rushes in, greatly excited, saying that

Arline has been attacked by a vicious stag. Thaddeus seizes a rifle, hastens after the hunters, and kills the animal. In gratitude, the Count asks him to dine with the huntsmen, but at the banquet Thaddeus refuses to drink a toast to the emperor. The soldiers are ready to lay violent hands upon him, when Devilshoof interferes in his behalf. The latter is imprisoned for his temerity, but soon escapes, and is seen carrying Arline across a gorge in the mountains.

ACT II

Scene 1. A Gipsy Camp in Presburg. Twelve years have elapsed since the kidnapping of the Count's daughter. The child has grown up into a beautiful young woman, and her devoted guard is Thaddeus. The gipsies have reared the girl as one of their band. While Arline is sleeping Florestein, who comes drunken upon the scene, is robbed of a medallion. Arline now awakes and tells Thaddeus of her dream " of marble halls " of her childhood. The two declare their mutual love, and their hands are joined in the gipsy rite of betrothal by the Queen, who, however, is jealous and vows vengeance.

Scene 2. Another Street. The gipsies, led by Arline, go singing down the street on the way to a great fair.

Scene 3. The Fair. A crowd of sightseers and amusement-seekers is present. Florestein and the Count appear, and the former tries to make love to Arline, who repels him. The gipsy Queen then slips the stolen medallion into the girl's possession, so that she may be accused of robbing him. The plan succeeds and Arline is arrested.

Scene 4. Count Arnheim's Apartments. While the Count is gazing at the portrait of his long-lost daughter, the supposed gipsy girl is brought before him charged with the theft of the medallion. She pleads her innocence, and her story and a scar upon her arm enable the Count to recognize her as his daughter, and he receives her with open arms.

ACT III

Hall in the Count's Castle. Arline is seen surrounded by every luxury, but her heart is sad. She remembers the old free life and her love for Thaddeus. He also is longing for her, and

through the boldness of Devilshoof comes to visit her, but before the two men can retreat guests appear and they are forced to hide themselves. When the hall is filled with guests, the gipsy Queen appears and endeavours to throw shame upon Arline by announcing that she has concealed Thaddeus. The latter comes forward to defend the girl's name, and discloses his own identity as a Polish noble. The Count finally relents and agrees to his suit for Arline's hand. The gipsy Queen in a rage attempts to shoot Thaddeus, but as Devilshoof tries to wrest the rifle from her hands kills herself instead.

BORIS GODOUNOV

A National Music-Drama in Four Acts, with a Prologue by Modeste Moussorgsky (from Pushkin and Karamzin), revised and orchestrated by N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov. First produced at the Maryinsky Theatre, Petrograd, January 24, 1874.[1]

SCENE : Various Parts of Russia.

TIME : The End of the Sixteenth and Beginning of the Seventeenth Centuries (1598–1605).

CHARACTERS

BORIS GODOUNOV [Baritone].
FEODOR, *his son* [Mezzo-Soprano].
XENIER, *his daughter* [Soprano].
AN OLD NURSE [Mezzo-Soprano].
MARINA MNISHEK, *daughter of the Voyevode of Sandomir* [Mezzo-Soprano].
PRINCE CHUISKY [Tenor].
PIMÈNE, *monk and chronicler* [Basso].
THE PRETENDER DIMITRI, called Grigori [Tenor].
HOSTESS OF THE INN [Mezzo-Soprano].
VARLAAM, *a vagabond* [Basso].
MISSAIL, *a vagabond* [Tenor].
CHELAKOV, *Clerk of the Duma* [Baritone].
RANGONI, *a Jesuit in disguise* [Basso].
THE IDIOT [Tenor].
NIKITIN, *a constable or beadle* [Basso].
A COURTIER [Tenor].
BOYARD KHROUSTCHOV [Basso].
TWO JESUITS [Bassos].

Peasants, Boyards, Streltsy, Polish Lords and Ladies, Young Girls of Sandomir, Pilgrims, etc.

ARGUMENT

Russian history of three hundred years ago furnishes the material for this gloomy story. Boris Godounov, one of the most popular

[1] In 1928 Messrs J. and W. Chester, Ltd., published a handsomely illustrated version of Moussorgsky's masterpiece in its original form, as produced at the first complete stage performance. This is completely documented, and it restores the authentic version in vocal score.

nobles under Ivan the Terrible, has achieved supreme power in Russia through the marriage of his young daughter with Feodor, the weak-minded son of Ivan, through whom he virtually ruled until Feodor's death. He had previously caused Dimitri, Ivan's other son, to be murdered, and the memory of this crime haunts him continually. He has endeavoured to rule wisely and well, but troubles come upon him on every hand, and are augmented by the appearance of a Pretender to the throne, who claims to be the murdered Dimitri.

PROLOGUE

Scene 1. The Courtyard of the Monastery of Novo-Dievitchy, Moscow. An apathetic crowd is being urged by the police to appeal to Boris for his protection. Their listless demonstrations are interrupted by the Clerk of the Duma, who tells them that Boris cannot yet make up his mind to accept the Tsardom. *Scene* 2. The Courtyard in the Kremlin at Moscow. Boris, having accepted the crown, passes from the Cathedral to the Kremlin on his coronation day.

ACT I

Scene 1. A Cell in the Monastery of the Miracle. Pimène is writing his Chronicles of Russia, and Grigori, a young monk, describes to him a dream that has come to him three times. Pimène tells of the murder of Dimitri, with which he has just concluded his Chronicle.

Scene 2. An Inn on the Lithuanian Frontier. Grigori, posing as the Tsarevitch Dimitri, is fleeing from Boris's anger. With two rascals, Varlaam and Missail, disguised as two friars, he stops to drink at the inn. The Tsar's guards enter with a warrant for his arrest, but before they have fully realized his identity he has escaped through the window.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Tsar's Apartments in the Kremlin. The Tsar's son and daughter are there with their old nurse, who tries to console the young widow Xenier, and plays games with Feodor. In the midst of the games the Tsar enters in a sad mood. He

comforts his daughter and talks to his son about the map of Russia which lies open on the table, then muses sadly on the state of his kingdom, torn as it is by treacherous nobles and rebellious Poles. He is haunted ever by the memory of the murdered child, and sees in Russia's unrest the punishment of his crime. Chuisky enters with news of a rising in Poland in favour of the false Dimitri. Passionately the Tsar demands assurance that the Tsarevitch Dimitri was truly slain, and Chuisky assures him that he saw him dead. Left alone, the Tsar fancies he sees the child before him with blood dripping from his throat, and prays to Heaven for mercy.

ACT III

Scene 1. Marina's Room. Marina declares aloud her intention of winning the young Pretender's love for the sake of the power she will enjoy as Queen. In this she is encouraged by the Jesuit Rangoni, who desires her elevation to the throne to serve his own ends.

Scene 2. A Moonlit Garden of the Castle of Mnishek at Sandomir. A love scene between Marina and the false Dimitri.

ACT IV

Scene 1. A Clearing outside the City. The populace have risen against Boris on behalf of the Pretender. They bring in Khroustchov in chains and mock at him, while a couple of Jesuits are caught and threatened with death. A village idiot enters, hooted and jeered at by a troop of boys. Soon the false Dimitri himself appears on horseback, and is acclaimed by all, including Khroustchov. All follow Dimitri towards Moscow, save the poor idiot, who is left shivering and lamenting the woes of the " poor Russian folk."

Scene 2. The Granovitaya Palace in the Kremlin. A special sitting of the Duma of the boyards. The boyards are anxiously discussing the rising when Chuisky enters and tells them of the strange state of the Tsar. Boris himself soon enters, distraught and still seeing visions of the murdered boy. Pimène comes in to relate a miracle which has just been reported at the slain Dimitri's tomb, and upon hearing this the Tsar falls

unconscious. Feodor is hurriedly sent for, and the Tsar rouses himself, knowing that death is upon him. He advises his son as to his future conduct, and commends him to the boyards, falling back dead with a last agonized cry to Heaven for forgiveness.

CARMEN

Romantic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Georges Bizet. Book by Meilhac and Halévy, after the novel by Prosper Mérimée. First produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, March 3, 1875.

SCENE : Seville.

TIME : Early Part of Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

ZUNIGA, *a lieutenant* [Basso].
DON JOSÉ, *a brigadier* [Tenor].
MORALES, *a sergeant* [Basso].
ESCAMILLO, *a bull-fighter* [Basso].
DANCAIRO, *a smuggler* [Tenor].
REMENDADO, *a smuggler* [Baritone].
CARMEN, *a gipsy girl* [Soprano].
FRASQUITA, *a gipsy* [Soprano].
MERCEDES, *a gipsy* [Contralto].
MICHAELA, *a peasant girl* [Soprano].

Gipsies, Peasants, Citizens, Cigarette Girls, Soldiers.

ARGUMENT

"Carmen" is an opera full of colour and movement, founded upon Mérimée's brilliant romance depicting Spanish gipsy and peasant life. The central figure is a heartless coquette who lives only for the pleasure or passion of the passing moment.[1]

ACT I

A City Square. A troop of soldiers under the command of Don José, together with town idlers, throng the open square during the hour of noon. Especially are they interested in the pretty girls who work in a neighbouring cigarette factory. Only the officer, Don José, is indifferent to these coquettes as they jest with the men. Seeing his indifference, Carmen, the gipsy girl and the greatest flirt of them all, sets herself to

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Metzler and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

fascinate him and flings him a red rose. Don José's blood is finally fired, but the girls return to their work, and Michaela, a gentle peasant girl from his home village, arrives with a message for him. The officer is about to throw the gipsy's rose away when a commotion is heard within the factory, and the girls rush out. Carmen has quarrelled with another girl and stabbed her. The assailant is brought forward and pinioned to prevent further mischief, but she so bewitches the young officer that he connives at her escape.

ACT II

A Tavern Room. Carmen has returned to her nomadic life, and we find her with her companions singing and carousing in a road house. The famous bull-fighter, Escamillo, enters, and Carmen is greatly fascinated by him, and also makes him aware of her charms. The inn is closed for the evening, but Carmen and two of the gipsy men, who are smugglers, await the arrival of José. The latter is deeply in the girl's toils, and when he appears she urges him to desert the army and join the gipsy band. At first he refuses, but when a superior officer appears and orders him out, swords are drawn. Carmen summons the gipsies, who overpower the officer, and all, including José, escape to the mountains.

ACT III

Mountain Retreat of the Smugglers. The smugglers have been busy and successful, aided by José, who is still wildly in love with Carmen. She, however, is growing cold to him. He sees this and is deeply dejected by it and at the thought of his perfidy. Carmen's latest conquest, Escamillo, now appears seeking her, and José, wildly jealous, would spring at his throat but for the intervention of the gipsies. The faithful Michaela again finds José and beseeches him to hasten with her to the bedside of his dying mother. After a struggle between duty and desire, duty prevails and he departs with her.

ACT IV

Exterior of the Bull-Fighting Arena. All Seville is hastening to one of the great fights of the season, where their favourite

toreador, Escamillo, is to appear. Carmen has accompanied him, despite the warnings of her friends that the furious José is seeking her. Amid great pomp Escamillo enters the arena, but before she can follow him her discarded lover appears. At first he pleads with her to return to him. She refuses, and the enraged José stabs her to the heart just as the victorious fighter returns from the arena.

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

[*Rustic Chivalry.*] *Dramatic Opera in One Act. Music by Pietro Mascagni. Book by Targioni-Tozzetti and Menasci, after the story by Giovanni Verga. First produced at the Costanzi Theatre, Rome, May* 17, 1890.

SCENE : A Village of Sicily.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

TURIDDU, *a farmer* [Tenor].
LUCIA, *his mother* [Contralto].
ALFIO, *a carter* [Baritone].
LOLA, *his wife* [Contralto].
SANTUZZA, *a peasant girl* [Soprano].

Peasant Neighbours and Villagers.

ARGUMENT

The title " Rustic Chivalry " is plainly an ironic one ; the theme is well matched by the impassioned music which follows closely the simple story to its tragic close.[1]

The scene is an open village square, at one side of which is a church. Before the curtain rises, Turiddu, the young farmer, sings of his old love, Lola, " lovely as the spring's bright blooms." Turiddu has been in love with Lola, but while he was absent on army service she marries Alfio, a carter. Turiddu turns for consolation to Santuzza, a peasant girl who loves him not wisely but too well. Becoming tired of this easy conquest, he turns again to Lola, despite the fact that she is wedded. This is the state of affairs as the curtain rises on a peaceful village scene. It is Easter, and the devout peasants are going to church. Santuzza meets Lucia, her lover's mother, outside the church and gives her some inkling of the state of affairs. Next the faithless Turiddu appears with Lola, and spurns the

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

weeping Santuzza. Driven to despair, she tells Alfio of his wife's conduct. The carter departs threatening vengeance. During the interval while the worshippers are in the church (*Intermezzo*) the stage remains empty, but the curtain does not fall.

Church services over, the merry villagers throng the square, meeting and greeting. Cups are passed and Turiddu sings a rollicking drinking song. Alfio returns at this moment and is invited to drink. Instead he refuses and challenges Turiddu to fight, giving this challenge in the Sicilian form of biting his enemy's ear. The two retire, after Turiddu has bidden his mother farewell and asked her to care for the wronged Santuzza, and the duel is fought behind the scenes. A short, terrible pause ensues, followed by running messengers, and a cry from the women, " Turiddu has been slain ! "

LES CLOCHES DE CORNEVILLE

Light Opera in Three Acts. Music by Robert Jean Planquette. Book by Clairville and Gabet. First produced at the Folies Dramatiques, Paris, April 19, 1877.

SCENE : Normandy.

TIME : Reign of Louis XV.

CHARACTERS

HENRI, *Marquis of Villeroi* [Baritone].
GASPARD, *a miser* [Basso].
GERMAINE, *his niece* [Soprano].
SERPOLETTE, *a village girl* [Contralto].
JEAN GRENICHEUX, *a fisherman* [Tenor].
THE SHERIFF [Basso].

Villagers, Fishers, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Les Cloches de Corneville " is a tuneful light opera dealing with peasant and fisher life in an old village of Normandy.[1]

ACT I

Fair Day in Corneville. Henri, the young Marquis of Villeroi, who has long been absent from his home, is returning, and the villagers are celebrating the event. It is fair day and the village gossips are busy with their tales. They are specially severe upon Serpolette, a foundling and the village madcap, who proves, however, that she is abundantly able to take care of herself with her sharp tongue. Another person who comes in for a full share of criticism is the old miser, Gaspard, reputed to be very rich, but living a pinched life and dealing harshly with his ward, Germaine. He is determined that she shall marry the Sheriff, while she declares that if she should wed at all, her husband would be Jean Grenicheux, a young fisher-

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Joseph Williams, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

man, who she believes has saved her life. When the Marquis makes his appearance it is evident that it was he who rescued Germaine and left her fainting form in charge of Grenicheux, who obtained the credit of the deed. To escape the miser's plans both Germaine and Jean, together with Serpolette, decide to enter the service of the Marquis.

ACT II

The Castle of Villeroi. For many years, ever since the Marquis first went away, the old castle has been supposedly haunted. It is now an object of superstitious dread to the villagers. But the Marquis resolves to restore it to its former beauty, and orders his servants to search it thoroughly. They discover the miser Gaspard, who has employed this means of concealing his gold and preventing others from intruding while he was gloating over his treasures. When he is brought to light the shame of the discovery and fear of losing his wealth drive him half mad for the time being.

ACT III

Banquet Hall of the Castle. The castle has been entirely restored and the Marquis gives a great entertainment to all the villagers. The reigning belle of the occasion is Serpolette, some papers having been found which indicate that she is the missing heiress to the miser's gold. Jean is now her faithful satellite, while the Marquis and Germaine feel strongly drawn to each other, although Germaine tries to repel him on the ground that she is now only a servant. The Marquis pays no heed to this, however, and Gaspard, who has been wandering around in a demented state, finally recovers his reason and proves that Germaine is the rightful heiress after all. No bar now remains to the happiness of the lovers, and Serpolette's pranks are forgiven.

LE COQ D'OR

[*The Golden Cockerel.*] *Fairy Opera in Three Acts, with a brief Prologue and Epilogue. Music by N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov. Book by A. S. Pushkin. First produced at Limini's Opera House, Moscow, September 24, 1909.*

CHARACTERS

King Dodon [Basso].
Prince Guidon [Tenor].
Prince Afron [Baritone].
General Polkan [Basso].
The Astrologer [Tenor].
Queen of Shemakhan [Soprano].
Amelfa, *the Royal housekeeper* [Contralto].
The Golden Cockerel [Soprano].

Courtiers, Soldiers, etc.

ARGUMENT

"The Golden Cockerel" is a fairy tale pure and simple, and though the Astrologer in the Prologue informs his audience that in the story they are about to see "there is a lesson to you all, good people," it is difficult to find in it anything save a riot of colour and fantastic imagination.

PROLOGUE

In front of the curtain the Astrologer slowly rises to view holding a magic key. He informs the audience that he is able to invoke the shades and breathe life into the dead. He will show an old fairy tale, from which a lesson may be deduced for all who can understand it.

ACT I

Within King Dodon's Palace. The King, his two sons, and his boyards are discussing the best means of defending the kingdom against their enemies. Many conflicting opinions are offered, and in the midst of the heated argument the

Astrologer enters to offer the King a golden cockerel that will flap its wings and give warning when danger threatens. The delighted Dodon offers the Astrologer anything he likes to ask, and has the bird put up on the palace spire. The cock crows "*Reign and take your ease!*"—on hearing which King Dodon retires to bed and to sleep. Suddenly the bird crows "*Beware!*" The King reluctantly awakes to a sense of danger, despatches the unwilling princes to deal with the enemy, and retires once more to rest. Again the cock gives warning, again the King arises, with extreme distaste, and buckles on his armour with the assistance of the Royal housekeeper; he then sets out for the frontier with Polkan.

ACT II

The Frontier. The King arrives just before daybreak, and comes straightway upon the bodies of his two worthless sons, who have evidently killed each other in a quarrel. The day dawns as he stands there, and reveals a gay pavilion, which, with some apprehension, Dodon and his staff presume to be the enemy's. From it now appears a beautiful and charming woman, the Queen of Shemakhan. She proceeds at once to conquer Dodon by her beauty and fascination, and has a very easy task, for the King is quickly enslaved. To test the completeness of her victory she compels him to make himself ridiculous by singing and dancing. She agrees, however, to go back with him, and all depart for the capital.

ACT III

Before the Palace. The populace throng the fantastic streets to welcome back the King and his bride, who enter seated in a magnificent equipage. At this moment the Astrologer appears and demands his reward for the Golden Cockerel—no less than the Queen of Shemakhan herself. In a rage Dodon strikes him dead with his sceptre, but before he can proceed on his way the magic bird descends from the palace spire and kills the King with a blow of its beak. There is a rumble of thunder and complete darkness for a few moments. When it clears away Queen and Cockerel have disappeared, and the populace are left mourning their Sovereign.

EPILOGUE

The Astrologer appears again and explains that the sad conclusion need not disturb his audience—perhaps he and the Queen were the only real people in the story—the rest "a delirium, a dream. . . ."

COSI FAN TUTTE

[*So Do They All.*] *Comic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Words by Da Ponte. First produced at the Imperial National Theatre, Vienna, January* 26, 1790.

SCENE : Naples.

TIME : Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

ISIDORA } *Two sisters* [Soprano].
DORABELLA } *from Ferrara* [Mezzo-Soprano].
DESPINA, *their maid* [Soprano].
FERNANDO, *officer, in love with Dorabella* [Tenor].
GRATIANO, *officer, in love with Isidora* [Basso].
DON ALFONSO, *a cynical philosopher* [Baritone].

ARGUMENT

This deliciously sparkling opera, usually known in England as "The School for Lovers," was a 'command' performance, produced for the Emperor Joseph II of Austria, to whom Mozart had been appointed "Kammer-Musicus" in 1787. *Unfortunately the Emperor died less than a month after the first performance of the opera, and as his successor had no taste for music, the unfortunate composer reaped no financial benefit from his work.*

ACT I

The Scene in this Act is changed frequently, the first being laid in a *café* in Naples, the second in a garden on the seashore, the third in the house of the two sisters. The cynical Don Alfonso lays a wager with the two infatuated young officers that the constancy of Isidora and Dorabella would yield to an attack from a new quarter. They have unshaken faith in the two ladies. Very well, says Don Alfonso, let them place themselves at his orders for two days, and they will see. Don Alfonso then informs Isidora and Dorabella that their lovers have received marching orders, and must depart for the front without delay. A touching scene of farewell follows : the ladies, with many tears, vow eternal fidelity ; the gentlemen are equally fervent : Don Alfonso looks on with a grim smile.

Hardly have the two officers disappeared than Despina, who is in the plot, introduces two 'foreign' gentlemen, who immediately begin to pay exaggerated court to Isidora and Dorabella. They are, of course, Fernando and Gratiano in disguise. Being repelled, they pretend, in their despair, to take poison, and to be on the point of death. Despina, disguised as a doctor, restores them to life by mesmerism.

ACT II

The Scene is laid in the house and garden of the two sisters. The 'foreigners' are still importunate. The ladies begin to waver. As a token of her regard Dorabella gives the disguised Gratiano, actually her sister's lover, a locket in the shape of a heart. It contains a portrait of Fernando; but what of that? Isidora, too, relents. The impetuous 'foreigners' demand that a Notary shall be sent for, to draw up the marriage contract without delay. The Notary arrives; it is the versatile Despina in another disguise. The contract is drawn up and a banquet is made ready. Then in comes Don Alfonso with the startling news that Fernando and Gratiano are on their way home, and may arrive at any moment. The 'foreigners' beat a hasty retreat, the 'Notary' conceals 'himself' as best he can. And lo! here are Fernando and Gratiano, returned from the wars, and much intrigued at the state of affairs which they discover. They seize the marriage contract; they drag forth the 'Notary'; then they rush off to look for the impudent rivals whose names they have found in the contract.

To the no small astonishment of the ladies, Despina now throws off her disguise. But their astonishment is greater still when Fernando and Gratiano come in, speaking and acting for all the world like the 'foreigners' of whom they had gone —or pretended to go—in pursuit. Soon the tangle is unravelled. Don Alfonso has assuredly won his wager! He succeeds in reconciling the lovers; for, as he remarks, it is no use being angry with women for flirting—*cosi fan tutte*, So do they all!

Note.—When this opera is given in Italian the characters here called Gratiano and Isidora usually go by the names of Guglielmo and Fiordiligi.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

Romantic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Gaetano Donizetti. Words by Bayard and St Georges. First produced in Paris, 1840.

SCENE : A Valley in the Austrian Tyrol.

TIME : The period of the Napoleonic Campaigns in Austria.

CHARACTERS

SULPIZIO, *a sergeant in the French Army* [Basso].
TONIO, *a young Tyrolean* [Tenor].
HORTENSIO, *steward to the Countess of Birkenfeld* [Basso].
A CORPORAL [Basso].
MARIE, *a foundling, the adopted Daughter of the Regiment* [Soprano].
THE COUNTESS OF BIRKENFELD, *her real mother* [Soprano].

Grenadiers, Peasants, Guests of the Countess, etc.

ARGUMENT

This flimsy but amusing light opera was a prime favourite in the age of crinolines and stove-pipe hats, and has not entirely lost its hold upon popular affection in this very different age. It contains a greater infusion of comedy than is found in most operas of this class.

ACT I

A Valley in the Austrian Tyrol. A chorus of Tyrolean ladies, including the ridiculous Countess of Birkenfeld, is imploring heaven to protect them from the advancing French soldiery. After a time, the Countess, whose conscience is evidently not at ease, takes shelter in a cottage with her steward, Hortensio. Then enters Sulpizio, exulting in the punishment which he and his Grenadiers have just inflicted upon the Tyroleans, and closely followed by Marie, the adopted " Daughter of the Regiment." Every soldier in that Regiment regards himself as Marie's father by adoption ; but the Sergeant has the chief claim to that proud title, as it was he who found her, as an infant, abandoned on a battlefield, and saved her life. Marie

was destined to have her life saved more than once. Tonio, the young Tyrolean, has rescued her just as she was falling over a precipice. So she informs the Sergeant, when he reminds her that it is high time she chose a husband from among her loyal Grenadiers. And she adds that Tonio, and no other, is the husband of her choice. In come the Grenadiers, dragging Tonio with them, and threatening to shoot him as a spy. Marie's intercession calms their wrath, but the Sergeant makes it clear that no one but a *son* of the Regiment may aspire to her hand. The Countess, emerging from the cottage, now asks for a military escort to her Castle of Birkenfeld. The word awakes a slumbering memory in the Sergeant's mind. He produces the paper which he found with the infant Marie on the battlefield, and the startled Countess acknowledges the girl as her long-lost 'niece.' Marie is most reluctant to go away with this strange new relative, and 'learn to be a lady,' more especially as Tonio has pinned the French colours in his cap, and has enrolled himself in the Regiment, *her* Regiment. But there is nothing for it. She takes a sorrowful (and musical) leave of her dear Grenadiers, while the bereaved warriors invoke curses on the head of the Countess.

ACT II

In the Castle of Birkenfeld. Marie finds great difficulty in adapting herself to her altered circumstances. Sulpizio, the Sergeant, who has entered the service of the Countess for her sake, sympathizes only too cordially with her sentiments. She must forget the old, rollicking songs which she used to sing to the Grenadiers, and learn feeble drawing-room lays; she must forget Tonio, and be the bride of the Duke of Crackenthorpe. Just as she has finished a song telling of her longing for her old life, a roll of drums is heard outside. It is the Regiment, headed by Tonio, now an officer, with his arm in a sling. The Countess, who turns out to be not Marie's aunt but her mother, is still anxious to hurry on her marriage with the Duke: but the distress of Marie, the earnestness of Tonio, and the energetic protests of the Grenadiers induce her to change her mind, and she joins the hands of the lovers amid general rejoicing.

DON GIOVANNI

[*Or, The Marble Guest.*] *Opera Bouffe in Two Acts. Music by Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Book by Da Ponte, after a Spanish tale by Tirso de Molina. First produced at Prague, October 29, 1787.*

SCENE : Seville.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

DON GIOVANNI [JUAN], *a Castilian dandy* [Baritone].
DON PEDRO, *the Commandant* [Baritone].
ANNA, *his daughter* [Soprano].
ELVIRA, *a former sweetheart of Juan* [Soprano].
DON OCTAVIO, *the fiancé of Anna* [Tenor].
LEPORELLO, *servant of Juan* [Basso].
MASETTO, *a peasant* [Basso].
ZERLINA, *his betrothed* [Soprano].

Spanish Nobles, Ladies, Guests, Guards, Servants.

ARGUMENT

Among the many operas on the subject of Don Juan and his amours, none has the merit or the enduring popularity of this of Mozart.

ACT I

Scene 1. The Garden of the Commandant's Palace. Don Juan, a notorious libertine of Seville, goes by night to enter the apartments of Don Pedro's daughter, Anna, who is betrothed to Octavio. As soon as she discovers the intruder's presence she cries for help, and her father hastens to her aid. He is mortally wounded by Don Juan, who escapes in the darkness without being recognized.

Scene 2. Public Square in Front of Don Juan's Palace. Returning from this bloody adventure, Don Juan and his servant Leporello calmly discuss new conquests. While they consult,

a former discarded sweetheart, Elvira, appears and upbraids Don Juan for his cruelty. He retreats, leaving the girl with his servant, who reveals to her the amazing list of his master's villainies.

Don Juan's next piece of rascality is an attempt to seduce Zerlina, a peasant girl, on the very eve of her wedding with Masetto, a villager. He is foiled, however, by the entrance of Elvira, who shows the girl her danger. Meanwhile, Octavio and Anna have been searching for the murderer of Anna's father, and come to ask Don Juan to aid them in the search, but they soon begin to suspect the libertine of the deed. Preparations proceed for the peasant wedding, and Don Juan's servant aids him to hoodwink Masetto and Zerlina. The jealous bridegroom is pacified by his bride, while the libertine conducts both to a gaily decorated apartment prepared for them. Masked guests arrive.

Scene 3. The Ball Room. While all the guests engage in a dance, Leporello devotes himself to Masetto, and Don Juan conducts Zerlina to a private room. She resists his advances, and her cries attract the masked guests, who prove to be Anna, Elvira, and Octavio. Don Juan draws his sword, fights his way through the crowd, and escapes.

ACT II

Scene 1. Before Elvira's House. Don Juan still pursues Zerlina, who is in the service of Elvira. He exchanges cloaks with his servant, who goes to call upon the mistress while the master devotes himself to the maid. Masetto comes upon the latter, in the midst of a serenade, but is beaten by Don Juan, who again gets away.

Scene 2. Elvira's Apartments. The pretended Don Juan is unmasked by Elvira, Anna, and Octavio, and found to be Leporello. Their suspicions are further confirmed as to Don Juan's guilt.

Scene 3. A Graveyard, in which stands a statue of the slain Don Pedro. Leporello, who has escaped, comes to tell his master of what has occurred, but the latter's spirits are still gay and he plans further deeds of violence. At this juncture a hollow voice warns him to repent ere it is too late. It is the statue of the murdered nobleman speaking to him. The

libertine, unabashed, jeers even at this and invites the statue to attend a banquet which he is to give.

Scene 4. The Apartments of Donna Anna. Love scene between Anna and Octavio (sometimes omitted).

Scene 5. Don Juan's Dining Hall. True to his word, Don Juan has spread a sumptuous repast, and in the midst of it a heavy tread is heard. The marble statue of the Commandant enters and bids the libertine accompany him. The floor opens and both descend into the infernal regions.

DON PASQUALE

Comic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Gaetano Donizetti. Words by Camerano, after "Ser' Marc Antonio." First produced at the Théâtre des Waliens, Paris, January 4, 1843.

SCENE : Rome.

TIME : First half of the Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

DON PASQUALE, *an old bachelor* [Basso].
DR MALATESTA, *a physician* [Baritone].
ERNESTO, *Pasquale's nephew* [Tenor].
NORINA, *a young widow* [Soprano].
A NOTARY [Basso].

Citizens, Tradespeople, Servants.

ARGUMENT

This farcical little opera recalls the plot and action of some of Molière's comedies. The eccentric and unreasonable elder, whether father, uncle, or guardian, the machinating friend, the lively widow, are all stock figures of comedy. Donizetti's music strikes just the right gay and vivacious note.

ACT I

A Room in Don Pasquale's House. Don Pasquale is in a mighty rage because his nephew, in defiance of his wishes, desires to marry the sprightly widow, Norina. Dr Malatesta, the friend of all three parties, hatches a little plot in order to bring the old man to a more reasonable frame of mind. He introduces Norina to Don Pasquale in the guise of his (Malatesta's) sister, and suggests that, as she is in every way a desirable 'catch,' the Don should marry her. Which, rather surprisingly, he agrees to do.

ACT II

In Don Pasquale's House. He and Norina are now formally

affianced, and she, coached by Dr Malatesta, proceeds to make things hum. Ernesto, not in the secret, looks on in amazement, while she snubs and bullies his uncle, and alarms the old man with all sorts of wild spendthrift schemes.

ACT III

Scene 1. In Don Pasquale's House. Norina is discovered surrounded by clamorous tradespeople, with whom she has run up huge bills. Don Pasquale enters, protesting loudly, and, after a brisk altercation, she soundly boxes his ears. Malatesta arrives, and tries to pacify the Don, but in vain. Nothing will satisfy him but the immediate departure of Norina, bag and baggage.

Scene 2. A Street with a Balcony. While Ernesto is serenading Norina, Don Pasquale arrives, and taxes her with being a faithless jilt. Explanations follow. It is revealed to the old man that the contract of betrothal was a bogus one. In his relief, he is only too glad to give his blessing to Ernesto and Norina, and to consent to their speedy nuptials.

THE EGYPTIAN HELEN

Dramatic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Richard Strauss. Words by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. First produced, Dresden, June 6, 1928.

SCENE : Egypt and Morocco.

TIME : Homeric Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

MENELAUS [Tenor].
ALTAIR [Baritone].
DA-UD, *his son* [Tenor].
THE ALL-KNOWING MUSSEL [High Tenor].
HELEN, *wife of Menelaus* [Soprano].
HERMIONE, *their young daughter* [Soprano].
AITHRA, *an Egyptian princess and sorceress* [Soprano].
FIRST HANDMAIDEN [Soprano].
SECOND HANDMAIDEN [Mezzo-Soprano].
FIRST GOBLIN [Soprano].
SECOND GOBLIN [Soprano].
THIRD GOBLIN [High Tenor].

Elves, Slaves, Soldiers, Eunuchs, etc.

ARGUMENT

The plot of this opera was suggested to von Hofmannsthal by the passage in the "Odyssey" describing how Telemachus visited Lacadæmon, and found Menelaus and Helen living amicably together, the Queen plying the King with draughts of nepenthe whenever he began to remember the awkward history of the Trojan war. The music is more direct and simple in its emotional and sensuous appeal, more comprehensible and more melodious than the music of Strauss's "Elektra." Perhaps a more appropriate title for the work would be "Helen in Egypt," but author and composer have preferred "Egyptian Helen." [1]

ACT I

In the House of the Royal Sorceress Aithra. She is awaiting her divine lover, Poseidon, in company with a mysterious-

[1] My thanks are due to Herr Adolph Fürstner for permission to use his text of the opera.

talking Mussel, a gift from the god. A ship is approaching, with Menelaus and Helen, homeward bound from Troy. The Mussel announces that Menelaus is about to stab Helen to death in her sleep, and urges Aithra to intervene. Aithra promptly conjures up a violent storm, which she appeases when Menelaus takes Helen in his arms and swims with her through the fierce waves. Guided by a torch, the royal travellers make their way to the house of the princess. Helen is anxious to win back the love of her much-wronged husband, but he is proof against all her wiles. He thinks of all the valiant men, Greeks and Trojans, whom her beauty has done to death. He tells her how near he came to killing her on the ship, with the same dagger that slew Paris: that she shall never see again their daughter Hermione, to whom a dead mother were less shame than such a living one. Helen invokes the earth and the night, the moon and the sea, to come to her aid, that she may soften his heart. Just as he raises his dagger to smite her, Aithra, by her magic art, stays his hand. She calls up a horde of spirits to bemuse and perplex him and lead him away. Meanwhile she and Helen become fast friends, and she gives the beautiful Queen a magic potion to drink. Another potion is given to Menelaus, and Aithra proposes that she shall convey them by her art to an island in the shadow of Mount Atlas, where they may dwell in peace and bind anew the links of their former love, in a place where the story of Troy is unknown. As a farewell gift she bestows upon Helen a flask of the precious fluid which will ward off dangerous memories and deathful dreams. Then upon her magic mantle she wafts the reconciled lovers to their island retreat.

ACT II

Scenes 1 *and* 2. A tent in an oasis under the shadow of Mount Atlas. Helen and Menelaus are established in their new abode, he still bemused by Aithra's potion. A company of mail-clad desert warriors descend upon their solitude, led by Altair, the chief of the district, who promptly succumbs to the all-conquering enchantment of Helen's beauty, and flings himself at her feet. He has been sent by Aithra and her two sisters, the three Queens of the land, to pay homage to the beautiful

stranger, to bid her to a banquet, and to bring her rich gifts. His son Da-ud swears allegiance to Helen, and Menelaus imagines that in this desert prince he sees Paris alive again. They are about to go hunting gazelle, and Da-ud rather aggressively attaches himself to Helen, as her escort and squire. Helen sets the helm upon the head of Menelaus before he rides forth, but she tries to take his sword from him, for she sees that he is still half-distraught. Still haunted by bitter memories, he reverts to the time when he went once a-hunting and returned to find that his wife had fled. Helen decides sorrowfully that Aithra's potion was both too strong and not strong enough.

Scene 3. Aithra and her two handmaidens arrive, veiled with gold, in guise of slave-girls. She brings two flasks, one with a potion to dull memory, and one with a potion to awaken it. Helen tells her that Menelaus does not know her, that he thinks she is a strange woman in whose embraces he wrongs that Helen whom he believes to be dead. She desires now to wake his memory, and win back his conscious, reasoning love. Aithra argues with her, implores her not to reject the divine balsam of oblivion, but Helen remains resolute. The desired draught is mixed with wine in a great mixing-bowl. Altair returns from the chase, and begins to make love to Helen. Meanwhile Menelaus has pursued and slain Da-ud.

Scene 4. The Same. Da-ud's dead body is borne in by two black slaves and laid down upon a carpet. Menelaus enters, with his naked sword in his hand, like a man hunted by the Furies, wild-eyed and distraught. He seems not to see the body of Da-ud. Helen gently takes the sword from him. He dreams that in Da-ud he has slain Paris a second time. Flashes of reason light up his mental darkness fitfully. Helen decides that now is the time to finish the mixing of the potion of remembrance, and to prevail upon him to quaff it. Slaves divest him of his armour, and set a bright garland on his brow. The lance-tips of a procession of warriors are seen outside, and the banners follow, moving to the beat of a great drum. The promised banquet of Altair is about to begin. Aithra becomes alarmed. She invokes Poseidon, and a far-off thunder of waters answers her. Helen makes ready, despite the reiterated protests of Aithra, to give the potion of remembrance to her husband. The slaves of Altair are heard lamenting without.

Believing that he is nigh unto swift and violent death, he pledges her in the enchanted cup. When he has drunk, he recognizes his wife, and his hand instinctively seeks his sword-hilt. Aithra interposes with the news that the child, Hermione, is coming. Menelaus flings away the sword, and holds out his arms to Helen. Altair breaks in, with his followers. Menelaus has broken the sacred bonds of hospitality; his life and his wife are alike forfeit. But Aithra has not called upon Poseidon in vain. She pulls back the curtains of the tent and reveals a great host of steel-clad warriors, having in their middle a white horse, on which sits the child Hermione. When Altair recognizes Aithra, he prostrates himself in the dust. The child descends from the horse, runs to her father, and asks, "Father, where is my beautiful mother?" Emotionally, this is the great moment of the whole opera. Two more white steeds appear, one for Menelaus and one for Helen, now reconciled for ever. As they are about to mount and ride away with their daughter, in happy reunion, the curtain falls.

ELEKTRA

Dramatic Opera in One Act. Music by Richard Strauss. Book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. First produced in Dresden, January 25, 1909.

SCENE : Greece.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

QUEEN CLYTEMNESTRA, *widow of Agamemnon* [Mezzo-Soprano].
AEGISTHUS, *her paramour* [Basso].
ORESTES, *the Queen's son* [Tenor].
ELEKTRA, *the Queen's daughter* [Soprano].
CHRYSOTHEMIS, *the Queen's daughter* [Soprano].

Messenger, Waiting Women, Soldiers, Courtiers.

ARGUMENT

In "Elektra," a modern interpretation of an ancient Greek story, the death of King Agamemnon at the hands of the Queen and her paramour is avenged by the crazed daughter. The story is unpleasant but powerful, and lends itself to the unconventional musical treatment given by the composer. The action is confined to a single act, which takes place in an inner court of the royal palace at Mycenæ.[1]

As servants tell of the strange behaviour of the grief-crazed, revenge-driven Elektra, daughter of the murdered Agamemnon, she appears and reveals her plans of vengeance in which she shall be aided by Orestes, her brother. Chrysothemis, her sister, who is actuated by softer, more womanly feelings, now enters and urges Elektra to abate her hatred lest harm come to them all, and warns her especially against their mother. The Queen appears at a lighted window, and as she and her wild daughter rail at each other, news is brought that Orestes is dead. Elektra, however, states that she alone will slay "the woman and her husband."

[1] "Elektra," copyright MCMVIII, by Adolph Fürstner, Berlin.

But the report as to Orestes proves false, and he presently returns to the court in disguise. At first Elektra does not know him, but when she recognizes him her joy is almost savage. The tragedy from this point rapidly reaches its consummation. Urged on by the implacable sister, Orestes enters the palace and slays both his mother and Aegisthus, while Elektra waits outside in a perfect frenzy of impatience. When she is assured that the bloody revenge is accomplished she dances madly until she falls prone upon the ground. Chrysothemis runs to her only to find her dead.

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Comic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Gaetano Donizetti. Book by Romani. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1832.

SCENE : An Italian Village.

TIME : Early Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

ADINA, *an heiress* [Soprano].
NEMORINO, *a peasant* [Tenor].
BELCORE, *a sergeant* [Baritone].
DULCAMARA, *a strolling charlatan* [Basso].
GIANNETTINA, *a peasant girl* [Soprano].
A NOTARY [Baritone].

A Moor, Villagers, etc.

ARGUMENT

The plot of this tuneful little opera is purely farcical, and works itself out very ingeniously. The music, written when the composer was still very young, shows strong marks of the influence of Rossini.

ACT I

Scene 1. Adina's Garden. She is reading a book, and smiling at what she reads, watched by a group of reapers resting in the shade. She is asked at what she is smiling, and replies that it is an old love story, called *Tristan and Iseult.* It tells how Tristan, scorned by Iseult, drank a certain potion, an elixir of love, and whenever he had drunk it, she fell into his arms. These words are overheard by the enamoured Nemorino, who wishes desperately that he might find and drink some such elixir, and so win the love of Adina.

The gallant Sergeant Belcore now appears and lays siege to the heart of Adina. When he departs Nemorino timidly emerges, and pleads his cause. But he fares no better than Belcore. She tells him not to waste his time in sighing. Why should he not go right away for a time ? Let him go and visit his old uncle, who is said to be dying.

Scene 2. The Village Square. Arrival of the great Doctor Dulcamara, in a gilded chariot, preceded by a trumpeter. The villagers crowd round to buy his wares, cures for wrinkles, toothache, headache, heartache, all the ills that flesh is heir to. When the people disperse Nemorino approaches the Doctor and asks him if, by any chance, he has any of that famous love potion which won the heart of Iseult for Tristan. "Why, of course," returns the charlatan, "I am the sole proprietor and distiller!" And he gives the infatuated Nemorino a large bottle full of—heady red wine. "Drink it all now," he commands; and he adds that the spell will not begin to work until the next morning (when he himself will be safely away again). Nemorino obeys, and immediately his spirits rise. Adina returns, and is astonished at the alteration in her whilom timid and adoring wooer. He tells her that he has taken her advice to heart, and will sigh no more. Let her wait till to-morrow, though! *Then* she'll see! The affronted Adina decides to bestow her hand upon Sergeant Belcore; but Nemorino is too deeply under the influence of the 'elixir' to show either anger or surprise. When, however, a messenger arrives with despatches, marching orders for the morrow, and Belcore urges Adina to marry him not a week hence, as she had promised, but on the spot, poor Nemorino is suddenly sobered. He had been relying upon the effect which the elixir was to produce in his favour *the next day*. He implores Adina to wait a little, to think twice, but in vain. The wedding is to take place in an hour's time. And as the curtain falls the distracted Nemorino is calling wildly to the Doctor to come to his rescue.

ACT II

Scene 1. In Adina's Kitchen. Preparations are being made for her marriage to the Sergeant. Belcore's men are enjoying themselves. So is Dr Dulcamara. When the Notary arrives to draw up the contract, every one leaves the stage except the Doctor, who continues to gorge himself. To him enters Nemorino. What is he to do? Why, says Dulcamara, take another bottle of the elixir, and the spell will begin to work in half an hour. Well and good. But Nemorino has no more money, and Dulcamara will not give him the elixir for nothing. In

comes the gallant Sergeant, to whom Nemorino confides his need, though not his motive. Nothing could be simpler, says the Sergeant. Let him enlist, and so obtain the sum desired!

Scene 2. The Village Square. All the gossips of the village are greatly excited. Nemorino's uncle has died and left him his whole fortune. Nemorino now enters, obviously under the influence of the second bottle of the elixir. All the girls crowd round him, and begin to make little flattering remarks. He has not heard of his uncle's death, so at first he cannot understand their attentions. Then it dawns upon him! These are the effects of the elixir! It is beginning to 'work.'

Adina comes in, to find her faithful Nemorino flirting desperately with the whole group. At the sight, her old love for him revives. But when he has danced away, she cannot get over her bewilderment at the conduct of the girls. Dulcamara explains. It is all the effect of an elixir which he has sold to Nemorino—the very same elixir that Tristan drank in order to win the love of Iseult. Adina wonders whether Nemorino had any particular lady in mind when he bought the magic liquor. Oh, to be sure he had! He mentioned that he was dying with love for a certain lady—indeed, he enlisted simply in order to get the money to pay for it!

Adina's heart is touched: but she rejects the Doctor's suggestion that she, too, should invest in a bottle of the elixir. She trusts to her own charms, and to the fidelity of Nemorino, to attain her objective. Her first step is to buy her swain out of the army. Yet, when she shows him his discharge, he exclaims desperately, "What does a rejected lover care for liberty? It is better to die on the field of honour than to die miserably of love!"

A few minutes later the lovers are reconciled. Belcore very sensibly accepts his defeat. The neighbours rejoice. And the great Dr Dulcamara points out that this happy result is entirely owing to the effects of his elixir. What it has done for Nemorino and Adina it can do for anyone who drinks it. Now is the time! Now is the opportunity that will not come again!

In the twinkling of an eye the glorious quack has disposed of every phial in his stock. Then he climbs into his golden chariot, his herald blows a blast, and the great Dr Dulcamara departs as magnificently as he had come.

L'ENFANT PRODIGUE

A 'lyrical episode.' Music by Claude Achille Debussy. Words by Ernest Guiraud. First performed in England at the Sheffield Festival, 1908. *Covent Garden,* 1910.

SCENE : The outskirts of a village on the shores of Gennasereth.

TIME : Early in the First Century of the Christian era.

CHARACTERS

LIA [Soprano].
SIMEON, *her husband* [Basso].
AZAEL, *their errant son* [Tenor].

ARGUMENT

This 'lyrical episode,' with which Debussy won the Prix de Rome of the Paris Conservatoire in 1884, *is much more conventional, much more definitely influenced by tradition, than are the later and, perhaps, more characteristic works of the founder of the impressionist school of music in France. None the less, there are here traces of that marked originality of conception and courage in method which were to set the composer in the very front rank while he was still a comparatively young man.*[1]

The hour is early in the morning; the season is the time of harvest. Far off, joyful chants are heard. Lia enters alone, inconsolably mourning her son Azäel, who has left home, and whom she hardly dares to hope that she will ever see again on earth. Simeon comes, and rebukes her for this unavailing and untimely sorrow. A pageant of youths and maidens appears, followed by servants bearing garlands of flowers, fruits, and horns of plenty. They perform a choric dance and then, headed by Simeon and Lia, depart, their singing dying slowly away in the distance. When the stage is clear, Azäel enters, foot-sore, travel-stained, and weary. He has watched the dance

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs A. Durand et Fils, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

from the shelter of the low-swung boughs, and has recognized his brother and sister among the dancers. Overwhelmed with remorse, he thinks of the days of his innocence, when he used to sit by this same lake with his head against his mother's heart. He will lay him down here and die, within sight of the well-remembered village which he has neither the courage nor the strength to enter.

Lia now returns. She cannot bear the tumult of rejoicing, which frets her stricken spirit. Catching sight of Azäel on the ground, she thinks at first that he is a poor wayfarer, and goes to succour him. Then she recognizes her long-lost son, and folds him in her arms, with passionate words of love, and pity, and pardon. The servants reappear, and she tells them that this is the son of their master. Then Simeon himself returns, but, less ready to forgive than his wife, he stands looking down in silence at the prostrate form of his son, uttering only a hurried prayer to Heaven for guidance. Lia throws herself at his feet, imploring forgiveness for their child, and the father relents. He bids the servants make the glad tidings known with sounds of cymbal and tabor, and orders that the wine-jars shall be filled and the fatted calf slain. Then Azäel rises, he and his parents are folded in each other's arms, and all three sing a song of thanksgiving to the Lord God of Israel.

FALSTAFF

Comic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book by Arrigo Boito, after "The Merry Wives of Windsor," by Shakespeare. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, February 9, 1893.

SCENE : Windsor.

TIME : The Fifteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, *a soldier of fortune* [Baritone].
FORD, *a citizen of Windsor* [Baritone].
MISTRESS ALICE FORD, *his wife* [Soprano].
ANNE FORD, *their daughter* [Soprano].
MISTRESS PAGE [Soprano].
MISTRESS QUICKLY [Contralto].
FENTON, *suitor of Anne* [Tenor].
DR CAIUS, *a citizen* [Tenor].
BARDOLPH, *a follower of Falstaff* [Tenor].
PISTOL, *a follower of Falstaff* [Basso].
ROBIN, *a page.*

Innkeeper, Townspeople, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

Shakespeare's comedy has been closely followed for the plot of "Falstaff," which deals with the misadventures in love of this fat knight.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. A Room at the Garter Inn. Falstaff, the doughty knight whose prowess has been tested on the battlefield (if his own word is to be believed), decides to try his skill in the lists of love. He therefore prepares two *billets-doux* for two estimable wives of Windsor, and since his followers, Bardolph and Pistol, jib at taking them, he sends them by a page. He also quarrels with Dr Caius, who complains of being robbed by Bardolph and Pistol.

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

Scene 2. Ford's Garden. Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, the ladies who have received the epistles, meet and compare them, and with Mistress Quickly plan to avenge themselves upon the sender. Bardolph and Pistol confuse their plans by informing Ford of the affair. The latter is to meet Falstaff in disguise. Meanwhile, a plot of a different sort is afoot. Ford has planned that his daughter Anne shall marry Caius, but she is in love with Fenton, who meets her clandestinely.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Garter Inn. Dame Quickly comes to the inn to give Falstaff a note from Mistress Ford, apparently yielding to his wishes and making an appointment for that afternoon. After she departs Ford is introduced under the name of Brook, who pretends that he is a stranger seeking the love of Mistress Ford. Falstaff readily agrees to help him, and states complacently that he has an engagement with that lady for this very day. Ford has heard nothing of the women's plot and is both astounded and jealous, but dissembles his feelings.

Scene 2. Room in Ford's House. Falstaff arrives at Mistress Ford's and at once begins to make ardent protestations of love. At this moment Dame Quickly bustles in to say that Ford and his friends are at hand. The fat knight is hastily thrust behind a screen, and a little later, when the search begins in earnest, he is persuaded to hide in a basket of soiled linen. Meanwhile Fenton and Anne take refuge behind the screen for a little love-making on their own account. Ford returns and thinks he has discovered the villain behind the screen, and is greatly disgusted when the young lovers come to view. While the search proceeds Falstaff is nearly suffocated in the basket. The women, ostensibly to rescue him, have the basket conveyed to the river brink and its entire contents dumped into the water.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Garter Inn. Dame Quickly again visits the crest-fallen knight to express her sorrow and to make a new appointment. The knight again falls into the trap. Mistress Ford explains the whole hoax to her husband, and he promises to

aid them this time. Dr Caius is again promised Anne's hand, and Dame Quickly, who learns of it, runs to warn the lovers.

Scene 2. Windsor Park. Fenton is aided by the women, who disguise him as a monk. Falstaff again meets Mistress Ford, but is interrupted by a crowd disguised as witches, elves, and fairies, who belabour the knight soundly. He begs for mercy, and at his promise of good behaviour Ford pardons him. Meanwhile, Dr Caius finds that he has captured the wrong person, and Anne, for whom he has sought, enters with Fenton. Ford is persuaded to relent and unite the two lovers.

FAUST

Tragic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Charles François Gounod. Book by Barbier and Carré, after Goethe's drama. First produced at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, March 19, 1859.

SCENE : A German Village.

TIME : The Sixteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

FAUST, *a philosopher* [Tenor].
MEPHISTOPHELES, *the evil one* [Basso].
VALENTIN, *brother of Marguerite* [Baritone].
BRANDER, *a student* [Baritone].
SIEBEL, *a student* [Soprano].
MARGUERITE, *a village girl* [Soprano].
MARTHA, *her servant* [Contralto].

Students, Soldiers, Citizens. Servants, Fiends, Angels.

ARGUMENT

This version of the Faust legend has remained the most steadily popular of all. It follows the first book of the Goethe tragedy faithfully, and the music, although by a French composer, is closely in harmony with its spirit.

ACT I

Faust's Study. The philosopher Faust has spent his lifetime in the pursuit of learning, and now feels that he is growing old and that there is nothing else to live for. He resolves to end it all with a dose of poison, but his hand is stayed by the sound of Easter carols. Mephistopheles enters and promises him a new lease of life and many joys which he has missed if he will sell his soul. The fiend then shows him a vision of Marguerite. Faust consents to the compact and is transformed into a handsome youth.

ACT II

An Open Square. A festival is in progress and students, soldiers, and citizens wander about singing and making merry.

Valentin, a soldier about to set out for the wars, leaves his sister Marguerite in the care of Martha. Siebel, a boy, promises to be her champion. Mephistopheles now joins the throng of merry-makers and arouses popular interest by telling fortunes. He jests with Siebel on the subject of Marguerite, and Valentin overhears and resents his remarks. They draw their swords, but the fiend traces a circle of fire around himself. Valentin and his friends hold up their swords like crosses and the evil one slinks away. The dance continues, and Faust enters and offers his arm to Marguerite, but she repulses him.

ACT III

Marguerite's Garden. Siebel brings a bouquet to Marguerite, but the flowers fade until he dips them in holy water. He then leaves them on the doorstep and departs. Faust and Mephistopheles now enter, the fiend urging Faust to press his suit. Seeing the flowers, Mephistopheles departs to purchase a finer present. He soon returns with a casket of jewels, which he places beside the flowers, and both retire. Marguerite enters pondering over the handsome young gallant she saw in the market-place. She finds the casket and is delighted with the glittering gems, but does not wish to keep them. Martha, her companion, sees them and tells her she would be foolish to reject them. The fiend and Faust return, and the former beguiles Martha into a retired corner of the garden, leaving the coast clear for Faust, who woos Marguerite so ardently and persistently that the girl surrenders.

ACT IV

Scene 1. A City Street. The soldiers return victorious from war, among them Valentin. But his joy at seeing his sister again gives way to fury when he learns that she has been betrayed. At dusk Mephistopheles and Faust approach Marguerite's home and the fiend sings a mocking serenade. Valentin rushes out to avenge his sister's wrongs and crosses swords with Faust, but the latter, aided by the evil one, gives Valentin his death-blow. People rush in, and Marguerite bends over her dying brother, only to hear him curse her with his last breath.

Scene 2. Interior of the Church. Marguerite goes to the church and endeavours to pray, but the mocking fiend intrudes even here and tells her that she is damned for ever. Overcome, she falls upon the floor.

ACT V

Scene 1. Walpurgis Revel. Mephistopheles conducts Faust to the witch revels of Walpurgis-night, but Faust orders him to go to the succour of Marguerite. (Scene often omitted.)

Scene 2. The Prison Cell. Marguerite is ill and half mad, awaiting judgment for her misdeeds. Faust appears to her and urges her to cast in her lot with him and flee. She refuses to go, and says that she will submit to the will of Heaven. Faust and the fiend both urge haste, but Marguerite kneels in prayer. The prison walls open and angels rescue her and carry her upward, while the fiend claims Faust as his own.

FÊTE GALANTE

A 'Dance-dream' in One Act. Music by Dame Ethel Smyth. Book by Edward Shanks, founded on the story by Maurice Baring. First produced at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, June 4, 1923.

SCENE : A Moonlit Garden.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

THE KING [Bass-Baritone].
THE LOVER [Tenor].
PIERROT [Light Baritone].
HARLEQUIN [Light Tenor].
THE QUEEN [Mezzo-Soprano].
COLUMBINE [Light Soprano].
PANTALOON [Silent].
FOUR PUPPETS [Mixed Voices].

ARGUMENT

The underlying tragedy and pathos of motley and mumming have inspired both the story and the music of this 'Dance-dream.' The grim dénouement takes one a little by surprise, though a happy ending has seemed impossible from the first.[1]

The scene is a Watteau-esque pleasaunce ; in the background, a castle with lighted windows ; to the left, a small ornamental temple ; to the right, a raised knoll. Torch-bearers move to and fro. A gaily clad company, some of them wearing masks and dominoes, dances a saraband. Among the dancers are the King and Queen, unmasked, dancing together. She drops her handkerchief, which is picked up by a tall masquerader, who startles her by whispering a few words in her ear as he hands it back to her.

On the knoll a puppet-play is now enacted by Columbine,

[1] My thanks are due to Dame Ethel Smyth and to her publishers, Messrs J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Pierrot, together with four singers. Jealous Pierrot stabs first Harlequin, and then himself, to death for love of Columbine, at the instigation of Pantaloon. Columbine then descends from the knoll, dances in and out among the spectators, and then subsides at the feet of the King. The King asks her to dance with him, but she evades the honour, and slips away with Harlequin, followed by the jealous, despairing glances of Pierrot. The Queen, perceiving Pierrot's distress, gives him her hand to kiss. This mark of favour surprises the King, unaccustomed to queenly condescension. Columbine returns, and tries vainly to soothe her Pierrot, who, when Harlequin has borne her off again, wraps himself in his black domino and lies down under some bushes, as if to sleep.

Now the tall masquerader who picked up the Queen's handkerchief enters, closely followed by the Queen. She reproaches herself for having asked him to come there, and him for obeying her. They go together into the temple, and stand folded in each other's arms. Pierrot sits up and sees them, without seeing who they are. Then the Lover drops his long cloak, and reveals a Pierrot's dress beneath. The real Pierrot recognizes the Queen, and is about to steal away, when Columbine appears in a gap in the clipped hedge. She sees the Queen's face, but not the face of the Lover, and, thinking that he is Pierrot, she runs off with a low cry of rage, " Pierrot betrays me with the Queen ! " Pierrot now drops his domino and steps forward, singing a warning, but pretending to be merely remembering part of the puppet-play. The Lover makes good his escape just as the King appears, accompanied by Columbine. The King tells Columbine to get the truth out of Pierrot, while he himself conducts the Queen back to their guests. Pierrot realizes that Columbine did not see the face of the Lover, and when she reproaches him for making love to the Queen, he answers by singing a stanza from the puppet-play, and disdains to clear himself at the expense of another man. She departs, believing that Pierrot has been false to her, as the King returns. The King now tells Pierrot that he knows quite well that *he* was not with the Queen ; he first commands and then implores him to reveal who *was*. Pierrot falls on one knee, craving pardon " if too high his folly soared." As the guests begin to reassemble, the King beckons to two attendants, who seize

Pierrot. Satyrs and Bacchantes enter, dancing, and the whole company dances away up-stage. The Queen lingers for a moment, but the King compels her to follow the rest. As the stage darkens Pierrot and his guards are alone upon the scene. A shriek is heard. Light slowly returns. The figure of Pierrot is seen hanging in the temple : Columbine lies in a faint on the temple steps. The Queen stands rigid in a gap in the hedge, with the moonlight full upon her frozen face.

FIDELIO

Dramatic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Ludwig van Beethoven. Book by Joseph Sonnleithner, after Bouilly's "Leonore." First produced at the Theatre An Der Wien, Vienna, November 20, 1805.

SCENE : A Prison near Seville.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

DON FERNANDO, *minister of state* [Baritone].
DON PIZARRO, *governor of prison* [Baritone].
DON FLORESTAN, *a noble prisoner* [Tenor].
LEONORA, *his wife, known as "Fidelio"* [Soprano.]
ROCCO, *jailer* [Basso].
MARCELLINA, *his daughter* [Soprano].
JACQUINO, *turnkey* [Tenor].
CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD [Basso].

Prisoners, Guards, Citizens, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Fidelio," the only opera written by Beethoven, has been subjected to several changes. It was originally in three acts, and the composer wrote four different overtures for it. The book is a simple story of conjugal love and fidelity.

ACT I

Courtyard of the Prison. Don Florestan, a Spanish nobleman, having incurred the hatred of Don Pizarro, governor of the prison, mysteriously disappears. Florestan's wife, Leonora, suspects that his enemy has hidden him away in one of the prison dungeons, and disguises herself as a young man, under the name of "Fidelio," in order to rescue him. She enters the service of Rocco, the jailer, and soon finds her husband, as she had feared. Meanwhile, she is in danger of discovery, as she wins the approval of the jailer and his daughter, Marcellina, and the latter falls in love with the handsome "young man," much

to the sorrow of the turnkey Jacquino, who loves Marcellina. Fidelio cannot refuse the proffered match as she desires to keep on good terms with the jailer. Word is received that the Minister, Don Fernando, is coming to inspect the prison. This fills Pizarro with alarm, and he resolves to put Florestan out of the way before that time. Rocco refuses to kill the prisoner, but finally consents to dig the grave. Fidelio overhears the plans and is in despair. She obtains the jailer's permission for the prisoners to file out into the courtyard to get the fresh air. She hopes thus to get some message to her husband, but he does not appear with the rest, so she accompanies Rocco to dig the grave.

ACT II

Scene 1. Florestan's Dungeon. In one of the lowest cells of the prison Fidelio finds her husband weak from exhaustion. He does not recognize her. She gives him food and drink, and with simulated cheerfulness helps to dig the grave. Before the task is ended, Pizarro comes down eager to get his dangerous prisoner out of sight. The Minister is coming. Pizarro is about to stab the prisoner, when Fidelio, or Leonora, throws herself in front of him crying: "First slay his wife!" She menaces him with a pistol, and the cowardly governor flees. Trumpets from without announce the arrival of Don Fernando, while Florestan clasps his wife in his arms, and Rocco scratches his head in bewilderment.

Scene 2. The Courtyard. Fernando quickly frees Florestan, and the chains are ordered upon Pizarro instead. The Minister felicitates the rescued man on having a "Fidelio" for his wife. Marcellina decides that Jacquino will make her a better husband after all, greatly to the turnkey's delight.

LA FILLE DE MADAME ANGOT

[*The Daughter of Madame Angot.*] *Comic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Charles Lecocq. Book by Siraraudin, Clairville, and Koning. First produced at Brussels, December 4, 1872.*

SCENE : Paris.

TIME : 1797.

CHARACTERS

CLAIRETTE ANGOT, *betrothed to Pomponnet* [Soprano].
ANGE PITOU, *a poet* [Tenor].
MLLE LANGE, *actress and favourite of Paris* [Mezzo-Soprano].
POMPONNET, *a hairdresser* [Tenor].
LARIVAUDIÈRE, *a citizen* [Baritone].
LOUCHARD, *police officer* [Basso].
HERSILIE, *servant to Mlle Lange* [Soprano].
BABET *servant to Clairette* [Soprano].
TRENITZ, *officer of the Hussars* [Tenor].

Market Men and Women, People, Citizens, etc.

ARGUMENT

" La Fille de Madame Angot " is a typical French opera bouffe. The scenes are laid in Paris at the time of the Directory, which was established after the Revolution, when Barras was at the head of the Government.[1]

ACT I

A Corner of the Market Square. Clairette, daughter of the late Madame Angot, a market woman, is about to be married to Pomponnet, whom she does not love, all her affection being given to Ange Pitou, a ballad-monger. The poet has written a song directed against the reigning favourite of Barras, Mlle Lange, an actress, and her flirtations with Larivaudière. To

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Boosey and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

avoid her marriage with Pomponnet, Clairette sings this song in the public street, knowing that it will cause her to be arrested.

ACT II

The Drawing Room of Mlle Lange. Mlle Lange, interested in the story of the attack on her, desires the prisoner to be brought before her. Meanwhile Pomponnet assures her that Clairette is innocent and the author of the song alone guilty. When Clairette is brought before her Mlle Lange recognizes in her an old schoolfellow and friend, and promises her her liberty and the husband of her choice, not knowing that this will be Ange Pitou, in whom she herself feels an interest. The poet has been invited to her house and arrives during the interview with Clairette. Larivaudière arrives suddenly, and Mlle Lange, to quiet his jealousy, persuades him that Ange Pitou has come to see Clairette and join in the meeting of conspirators to be held in her house at midnight. The innocent Pomponnet is arrested for having the song in his hand. The conspirators arrive at the time appointed, and it is found that the house is surrounded by Hussars who have received private information of the meeting. At a signal the conspirators hide their badges of recognition and Mlle Lange succeeds in making the soldiers believe that she is holding a wedding ball for Ange Pitou and Clairette. During the dance Clairette and Lange discover that they are both attached to the poet.

ACT III

A Garden at Belleville, illuminated for a Ball. Clairette, released from prison, seeks to know whether Ange Pitou and Mlle Lange are indeed lovers. To this end she writes three letters, one from Lange to Ange Pitou, another from Ange Pitou to Lange appointing a rendezvous at the ball at Belleville, and a third to Larivaudière. The poet and Lange meet and are surprised by Clairette before Larivaudière and all the market people. A dispute arises, which terminates in the reconciliation of Clairette and Mlle Lange, while Clairette decides to give up the fickle poet in favour of the faithful Pomponnet.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

[*Der Fliegende Hollander.*] *Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer, after Heine's Version of the Legend. First produced at Dresden, January 2, 1843.*

SCENE : A Norwegian Fishing Village.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

A Dutch Sea Captain [Baritone].
Daland, *a Norse sea captain* [Basso].
Senta, *his daughter* [Soprano].
Mary, *her servant* [Contralto].
Eric, *a huntsman* [Tenor].
Daland's Steersman [Tenor].

Chorus of Maidens, Seamen, Villagers, etc

ARGUMENT

The legend of "The Flying Dutchman," condemned to sail the high seas for many centuries, finds a worthy musical and dramatic setting in this work of Wagner. According to this legend, a Dutch captain, foiled by contrary winds when rounding the Cape of Good Hope, takes a sacrilegious oath that he will succeed if he has to take eternity for it. Thereafter, for long centuries his ship is in charge of demons, who make it the sport of wind and wave. The opera deals with the lifting of the curse.

ACT I

A Bay in Norway. Daland, a Norwegian sea captain, is driven by a violent storm to the shelter of a port. During the storm a strange-looking vessel also arrives, riding high upon the waves, and casts anchor alongside. The captain, a man of wild aspect dressed in black, steps ashore. He is the famous Flying Dutchman, whom all mariners fear and dread. By the terms

of his oath, he is allowed to go ashore once in seven years, and if perchance he finds a wife who will leave all for love of him, the spell will be broken. He speaks with Daland and, finding that the latter has a daughter, asks permission to sue for her hand, at the same time offering Daland gold. The father's cupidity overcomes his scruples, and the storm having abated, the two vessels set sail in company.

ACT II

Interior of Daland's Home. Senta and her girl friends are seated at their spinning-wheels singing. Senta is a dreamy, romantic girl, who is already familiar with the strange story of the Flying Dutchman, and feels in her heart that she, at any rate, would be willing to give up all to save him. She tells the others of her mood, and Eric the huntsman, who loves her, enters at this moment and warns her against her dangerous whim. He also tells her that a mysterious stranger is approaching with her father, but Senta is delighted, and Eric leaves in dejection. Daland enters with the Dutchman, who gazes fixedly at the maiden and she at him. She readily accepts her father's plan for an early marriage, as she believes herself to be divinely appointed as the saviour of this sea rover. The two exchange vows of eternal fidelity, and the Dutchman believes his hour of liberation is at hand.

ACT III

The Harbour. The sailors on board Daland's ship give themselves over to merry-making. Girls bring them hampers of refreshments. The Dutchman's ship lies hard by, dark and silent, although his crew has been invited to share in the festivities. Finally they sing a mocking song of their captain's adventures, while the others listen in superstitious fear. Senta comes down to the shore followed by Eric, who makes one last plea for her to relinquish her folly and love him as she had formerly done. The stranger overhears this and, believing himself betrayed, bids her farewell and hastens on board his ship, ordering the anchor to be raised and all sails set. He admits publicly that he is the Flying Dutchman, upon whom a curse rests, and while Daland and the rest shrink back in horror the

ship heads towards the open sea. But Senta tears herself away from Eric and her father, who would restrain her, and, rushing to a cliff under which the vessel is passing, casts herself into the sea, faithful unto death as she has promised. Instantly the curse is lifted, the phantom ship sinks, and the Dutchman and his bride are seen ascending to the sky.

FRA DIAVOLO

[*Or, The Inn of Terracina.*] *Light Opera in Three Acts. Music by Daniel François E. Auber. Book by Eugène Scribe. First produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, January* 28, 1830.

SCENE : A Terracine Village.

TIME : The Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

FRA DIAVOLO, *a bandit chief* [Tenor].
LORD COCKBURN, *an English Tourist* [Basso].
LADY PAMELA COCKBURN, *his wife* [Mezzo-Soprano].
LORENZO, *an officer of the guard* [Tenor].
MATTEO, *a tavern-keeper* [Basso].
ZERLINE, *his daughter* [Soprano].
FRANCESCO, *a miller* [Baritone].
GIACOMO, *a bandit* [Basso].
BEPPO, *a bandit* [Tenor].

Bandits, Villagers, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Fra Diavolo," one of the most tuneful of the light operas, is written around the adventures of a famous Italian bandit, the terror of the countryside. Despite the heavy reward offered for his capture, he remains at liberty by adopting numerous disguises. In the present adventure he travels under the name of the Marquis of San Marco.

ACT I

Matteo's Tavern. The Roman authorities have offered a reward of ten thousand piastres for the capture of Fra Diavolo, the robber. Lorenzo, an officer, is sent with a company of guards and hopes to win this reward, and also the hand of Zerline, the pretty daughter of the innkeeper. Lorenzo proclaims the reward at the inn. Soon after, Lord and Lady Cockburn, English travellers, enter, saying that they have been robbed. Lord Cockburn has another grievance in the over-zealous

attentions of a travelling companion, the Marquis of San Marco, to his wife. The Marquis arrives, not at all disturbed by the *contretemps*, and orders a hearty dinner, while hearing Zerline relate stories of the celebrated bandit chief. He again devotes his attention to Lady Pamela, and purloins from her a valuable locket. Lorenzo and his guards now return with news that the robber band has been dispersed.

ACT II

Zerline's Bedroom. The English travellers are shown to their apartments, which adjoin the bed-chamber of Zerline. The girl, as she makes their rooms ready, is in high spirits over the success of her lover, Lorenzo. Meanwhile, Fra Diavolo and two of his gang hide themselves in Zerline's room. She returns and prepares for bed oblivious of their presence. After she has fallen asleep, the trio proceed to finish the job of robbing the English couple. They are detected, and an alarm follows Lorenzo and his guards appear, but Fra Diavolo, as the Marquis, covers the retreat of his two men. But the jealousy of both the nobleman and the soldier is aroused by the presence of the supposed Marquis in the sleeping apartments. To cover his designs, the latter declares that he had an appointment with Zerline. Lorenzo challenges him to fight a duel, and the bandit agrees to give him satisfaction on the following day.

ACT III

In the Forest. Fra Diavolo has resumed his own name and dress and exults in the fact that he is his own master once more. While awaiting the English travellers, or whoever else may cross his path, a wedding procession approaches. Zerline is to be married against her will to Francisco, a well-to-do peasant. In the procession are the two escaped bandits, who are recognized by Lorenzo and used by him to lure Fra Diavolo into an ambush. The stratagem is successful and the chief is slain, but at the last he is generous enough to declare Zerline's innocence. The English couple are amazed to find that he is one and the same with their acquaintance the Marquis. Especially is Lady Pamela chagrined over her folly. The successful Lorenzo claims and receives both rewards for which he has striven, to his own joy and that of Zerline.

DER FREISCHÜTZ

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Carl Maria von Weber. Book by Friedrich Kind, after an old legend in "Popular Tales of the Northern Nations." First produced at Berlin, June 18, 1821.

SCENE: Bohemia.
TIME: The Middle Ages.

CHARACTERS

OTTAKAR, *Duke of Bohemia* [Baritone].
KUNO, *his head gamekeeper* [Basso].
AGNES, *his daughter* [Soprano].
ANNA, *her friend* [Mezzo-Soprano].
MAX, *a ranger* [Tenor].
CASPAR, *a ranger* [Basso].
KILIAN, *a wealthy peasant* [Tenor].
A HERMIT [Basso].
ZAMIEL, *the evil one* [Speaking part].

Foresters, Villagers, Followers of the Duke, Servants.

ARGUMENT

The story of "Der Freischütz," or "The Sharpshooter," is based upon a Teutonic legend that magical bullets may be cast which never miss their mark.

ACT I

Estates of the Prince of Bohemia. The advancing years of Kuno, head ranger of the Duke of Bohemia, make the choice of a new head ranger necessary. Max, who is in love with Agnes, Kuno's daughter, is a candidate for the place, but in order to obtain it he must win in a sharp-shooting contest. At a preliminary trial Max is unsuccessful, the peasant Kilian being the better marksman. Max is much cast down and therefore disposed to listen to the evil counsels of Caspar, who has already sold himself to the devil and who hopes to obtain respite by furnishing this new victim. Max is invited to try Caspar's gun, and is astonished to find that he can bring down an eagle

from a great height. Caspar then tells him that he can obtain seven magical bullets which will hit any mark, but he must sell his soul for them. Max, undaunted, agrees to meet him at the Wolf's Glen at midnight.

ACT II

Scene 1. Agnes' Room. Agnes is filled with forebodings over the coming contest. She has met a hermit in the forest, who has warned her of impending danger. Then while she and Anna are in her room, at the very moment when Max tries the magic bullet, an ancestral portrait falls to the floor. Anna tries to calm her fears. She is not reassured when Max arrives and tells her he must hurry away to an appointment at the Wolf's Glen.

Scene 2. The Wolf's Glen. Caspar awaits the arrival of his victim, and meanwhile tells Zamiel, the evil spirit, of his success. When Max arrives the incantations are under way, and amid scenes of terror seven magical bullets are cast, six of which will fly as the marksman wishes, and the seventh as desired by Zamiel.

ACT III

Scene 1. Agnes' Room. Agnes is being prepared for her wedding with Max. She is still filled with foreboding, which is not lessened by finding that a box of flowers contains a funeral wreath. She is comforted, however, by a bridal wreath which the holy hermit has blessed.

Scene 2. Duke Ottakar's Camp. The marksmen's tourney is in progress, and Max astonishes all the spectators by his skill. Only one remains of his store of magical bullets, and this one the fiend has in personal charge. The Duke orders Max to shoot at a dove flying through the forest. He obeys, and a woman's shriek is heard. Agnes in her wedding finery has been struck; but she revives and it is found that the wreath blessed by the hermit has turned the bullet aside. The fiend, cheated of his prey, seizes upon the cursing Caspar, whose day of grace has expired. The horrified Max tells the story of the bullets and confesses his fault, whereupon the Duke imposes a year of penance before he can receive the post of head ranger or the hand of his bride.

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Humorous Opera in One Act. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Book by Gioachino Forzano. First produced at the Metropolitan Opera House, Milan, December 14, 1918.

SCENE : Florence.

TIME : 1299.

CHARACTERS

GIANNI SCHICCHI, *age* 50 [Baritone].
LAURETTA, *his daughter, age* 21 [Soprano].

The Relatives of Buoso Donati:
- ZITA, *called "the Old Woman," cousin to Buoso, age* 60 [Contralto].
- RINUCCIO, *Zita's nephew, age* 24 [Tenor].
- GHERARDO, *Buoso's nephew, age* 40 [Baritone].
- NELLA, *his wife, age* 34 [Soprano].
- GHERARDINO, *their son, age* 7 [Soprano].
- BETTO OF SIGNA, *a cousin to Buoso, poor and shabbily clothed, age unguessable* [Baritone].
- SIMONE, *a cousin to Buoso, age* 70 [Basso].
- MARCO, *his son, age* 45 [Baritone].
- LA CIESCA, *Marco's wife, age* 38 [Mezzo-Soprano].

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO, *physician* [Baritone].
AMANTIO DI NICOLAO, *notary* [Baritone].
PINELLINO, *shoemaker* [Tenor].
GUCCIO, *a dyer* [Basso].

ARGUMENT

This little opera is pure, sparkling comedy. The story of the dead man's relatives scheming to obtain for themselves the property he has willed to the Church, and being outwitted by the clever rogue they have called to their aid, is full of humour, and Puccini's brilliant music is thoroughly attuned to his theme.[1]

Scene : Buoso Donati's Bedroom. The relatives of Buoso are kneeling round the bed upon which his body lies. Their

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utterances are choked with feigned sighs and tears. Each hopes that he is his relative's principal legatee. When Betto suggests that rumour has credited the Church with the major share, their simulated grief is thrown aside and a frantic search is made for the will. At last it is found, and their worst fears are realized. Buoso's wealth is to go to the Church. In their dilemma Rinuccio suggests asking advice of Gianni Schicchi, with whose daughter, Lauretta, he is in love. Schicchi proposes that he shall impersonate Buoso and dictate a will to a notary and two witnesses, pretending that his hands are too paralysed to write. This scheme appeals to the relatives, and they decide to adopt it. The smaller possessions are apportioned between them without difficulty, but there remain the mule, the sawmills at Signa, and the palace in Florence. Each in turn privately offers Schicchi a bribe for the legacy of these, and each is reassured. He is arrayed in nightgown and nightcap and bundled into bed before the notary and witnesses enter. The pretended Buoso, in the quavering voice of an old man, dictates his will. To the Church he leaves five liras, to the relatives the smaller properties as arranged. Then comes the disposition of the mule, the sawmills, and the house in Florence. All hold their breath as he speaks. He leaves them—to his dear friend, Gianni Schicchi! The relatives fume, but they are helpless and dare not give themselves away. When the notary and witnesses are gone they pillage the room and set upon Schicchi, but he defends himself effectively with Donati's cudgel and pursues them downstairs. The young lovers, Rinuccio and Lauretta, are seen on the terrace clasped in each other's arms as Schicchi returns laden with loot. He glances at the lovers, and appeals to the audience to know if Buoso's hoards could have been put to better use, and asks for a verdict of "Not guilty."

LA GIOCONDA

Dramatic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Amilcare Ponchielli. Book by Tobia Garrio, after Hugo's Tragedy, "Angelo, the Tyrant of Padua." First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, April 8, 1876.

SCENE : Venice.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

LA GIOCONDA, *a street singer* [Soprano].
LA CIECA, *her blind mother* [Contralto].
ALVISE BADOERO, *an inquisitor* [Basso].
LAURA, *his wife* [Mezzo-Soprano].
ENZO GRIMALDO, *a Genoese noble* [Tenor].
BARNABA, *a spy* [Baritone].
ZUANE, *a boatman* [Basso].
ISEPO, *a scribe* [Tenor].
A PILOT [Basso].

Ladies, Senators, Masqueraders, Sailors, Monks, Citizens, Servants.

ARGUMENT

"La Gioconda" is a swiftly moving Venetian tale of love, intrigue, jealousy, and crime.[1]

ACT I

Court of the Ducal Palace. Called "The Lion's Mouth" because of a receptacle into which letters intended for the Inquisition are dropped. Leading her blind mother, the beautiful La Gioconda, a street singer, enters the ducal square just as a chorus of merry-makers have deserted it. She is in search of Enzo, a nobleman with whom she is in love. But the spy Barnaba bars her way, and when she repulses his advances he takes revenge by stirring up the populace against her mother, La Cieca, charging her with being a sorceress.

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

The woman is rescued by Laura, the Inquisitor's wife, once the sweetheart of Enzo. The latter, who has come upon the scene, also recognizes Laura, and the spy, noting their exchange of glances, plots a new piece of villainy. He arranges a meeting between them on board Enzo's ship, and at the same time sends word to Laura's husband of the adventure. La Gioconda also learns of the meeting.

ACT II

On Board Enzo's Ship. This act is called "The Rosary" from the fact that La Cieca has given Laura a rosary in token of gratitude, and it plays a further part in the action. While Barnaba gloats over the success of his scheme, Enzo comes on deck and greets Laura, who arrives in a boat. The two renew their pledges of love. Gioconda, who has hidden on board, now comes forward with a dagger, resolved to stab her rival, but Laura holds up the rosary given by Gioconda's mother, and the street singer, recognizing it, resolves to save rather than slay her. Gioconda advises her that Alvise, the outraged husband, is near at hand, and aids her to escape in her (Gioconda's) boat. Seeing his ship surrounded, Enzo sets fire to it, but he and Gioconda manage to escape.

ACT III

The House of Gold. Alvise is determined to avenge himself upon his unfaithful wife, and tells her she must die by poison. Deaf to her entreaties, he hands her a vial and bids her drain it before his return. Gioconda enters and substitutes a sleeping potion, and Laura is soon stretched upon the death-couch, pale and apparently lifeless. The grand ball which Alvise has been giving now continues with furious gaiety, and at the last he draws apart the curtains concealing the death-couch and reveals the form of Laura. Enzo rushes forward to attack Alvise, but is disarmed. Barnaba is placed over him as a guard, and Gioconda now tells the spy that if he will release him she will agree to his desires. Barnaba does so.

ACT IV

A Ruined Palace. While Gioconda sits alone and dejected, the unconscious form of Laura is borne in. Gioconda fights

an inward battle as to whether she shall kill or resuscitate her helpless rival. She finally resolves to kill herself. Enzo comes in and she tells him that Laura has been saved. Overjoyed, he hastens to the couch, hearing the voice of Laura. Barnaba enters to claim Gioconda as she has promised, and in reply she stabs herself, falling lifeless at his feet.

I GIOJELLI DELLA MADONNA

[*The Jewels of the Madonna.*] *Dramatic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. Book by C. Zangarini and E. Golisciani. First produced at Berlin, December* 23, 1911.

SCENE : Naples.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

MALIELLA, *adopted daughter of Carmela* [Soprano].
CARMELA, *Gennaro's mother* [Mezzo-Soprano].
GENNARO, *a blacksmith* [Tenor].
RAFAELE, *chief of the Camorrists* [Baritone].

Camorrists, Street-sellers, Townsfolk, etc.

ARGUMENT

The scene of action is modern Naples. The plot hinges on the rivalry of Gennaro, a blacksmith, and Rafaele, a Camorrist leader, for the love of Maliella.[1]

ACT I

A small open Square by the Sea (afternoon). A merry crowd in a small public square awaits the festival procession in honour of the Holy Virgin. Maliella escapes from her house with dishevelled hair and disordered dress, protesting against the restraint of her foster-mother. After some banter with Gennaro she sings a challenging song inviting the assembled crowd of youths to kiss her. An impromptu dance ensues, she is whirled in and disappears, but soon returns followed by Rafaele. She repels him, and when he seizes her to kiss her stabs him in the hand with a pin drawn from her hair. He hesitates, then kisses the wound, swearing she shall be his, and, as she replaces the pin in her hair, thrusts a flower in her bosom, which she snatches forth and flings to the ground. The procession comes

[1] My thanks are due to Herr Josef Weinberger, Vienna, for permission to use his text of the opera.

in sight, and he stays by her, pleading. As the Madonna passes he offers to risk his soul for her by placing the jewels of the Madonna round her neck. Terrified at the thought, she shrieks, while Rafaele and his fellow-Camorrists laugh. As she is about to enter her home again Rafaele throws her the flower she has rejected, and this time Maliella places it between her lips and goes within.

ACT II

The Garden of Carmela's House (evening of the same day). Maliella is with Carmela and Gennaro; the festival is not yet over. Carmela leaves them, and Genarro begins to plead with Maliella, but she complains of the monotony of her life and threatens to leave her home. Gennaro begs for a farewell kiss, and, losing control, clasps her in her arms and pours out his passion for her. Maliella escapes from him and proclaims her love for Rafaele, tauntingly repeating the Camorrist's offer to risk his soul for her by robbing the Madonna of her jewels. She returns to the house and Gennaro breaks down. The thought of Rafaele's boast possesses his mind, and his distraught fancy leads him to imagine that only by himself obtaining these jewels can he hope to win Maliella's love. He takes keys and tools with him and locks the garden door after him. Rafaele comes with his fellow-Camorrists to serenade Maliella. She enters the garden and he embraces her through the bars till warned away by the approach of Gennaro, who enters looking like a ghost. In answer to her cry he responds, "For you!" and discloses the stolen jewels of the Madonna. She screams, but Gennaro assures her that the Virgin has already forgiven his crime. Fascinated by the jewels glittering in the moonlight, she moves slowly towards them and clasps them about her head, neck, and wrists. The sight of the gems calls up the vision of Rafaele to her mind and possesses her utterly; all thought of Gennaro fades from her mind and, as if in a trance, she yields herself up to him.

ACT III

The Meeting-place of the Camorrists. It is the night of the festival. Some of the Camorrists lie about sleeping, others

come in from various expeditions. Rafaele enters and is boisterously greeted. After he has eaten, he sings of the charms of Maliella, which piques the Camorrist women, and they begin a wild bacchic dance, which by degrees degenerates into an orgy. Suddenly there is a loud knocking, and Maliella bursts in dishevelled, pallid, and bareheaded. Rafaele forces her terrible secret from her, and at the first mention of Gennaro's name commands his comrades to bring him his rival, alive or dead. Furious at the derision of his fellows following Maliella's confession, Rafaele spurns her brutally and she falls to the ground disclosing the jewels. Gennaro rushes in pursued by the Camorrists, and seeing Maliella cries her name. Filled with consuming hatred, she shrieks that he is accursed, tells how he robbed the Madonna, and, flinging the jewels at his feet, rushes out crying despairingly, "To the sea!" The wind, whistling through the den, blows out the candles one by one; the company flees, filled with superstitious terror, and Gennaro is left alone. He, not having obtained death from the hands of the Camorrists, crawls to a rude altar beneath a fresco of the Virgin and, craving pardon for his sacrilege, stabs himself and dies to the singing of the birds now awakening to the dawn. At this moment a crowd of the populace, armed with various weapons, bursts into the den seeking vengeance on the sacrilegist. At the sight of Gennaro, dead before the Virgin, they halt, awe-stricken, on the threshold.

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

[*La Fanciulla del West.*] *Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Libretto by Carlo Zangarini and Guelfo Civinini, based on the book by David Belasco. First produced at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, December* 10, 1910.

SCENE : A Californian Mining-camp.

TIME : 1848.

CHARACTERS

MINNIE, *a Western girl* [Soprano].
JACK RANCE, *the sheriff, a gambler* [Baritone].
JOHNSON, *alias Ramarrez, an outlaw* [Tenor].
DICK, *a servant* [Tenor].
LARKINS [Baritone].
HARRY [Baritone].

Miners, Bandits, Servants, Indians, etc.

ARGUMENT

" The Girl of the Golden West " is a romantic picture of Western pioneer life, which was successful as a drama before being given a musical setting. The days of the gold fever on the Pacific slope and of the rough-and-ready justice there accorded are here illustrated.[1]

ACT I

The Polka Bar. Minnie, a resourceful " girl of the Golden West," left an orphan, continues to run her father's bar-room for the benefit of the miners who flock to the newly discovered gold-diggings of California. Minnie herself can gamble and shoot with the best of them if necessary, but she is treated by the camp as a sort of ward whom it would be sudden death to insult. While her friends the miners are congregated at her bar a wandering minstrel halts outside and sings of the " Old Folks at Home," moving some of them to tears. Then Minnie

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

sings a love song which also arouses the sentiment of her hearers. During the singing, Jack Rance, the sheriff, who is also a gambler and who has long loved Minnie, enters. He pleads his love, but she will not listen to him.

The mountains behind the camp have been overrun for some time by a band of outlaws under the leadership of Ramarrez. The miners have offered large rewards for their extermination, but the outlaws are so bold and reckless that they plan a robbery in the camp. Their leader comes, under the name of Johnson, to the Polka bar in order to look over the ground and, in the evening, give the signal to his men. But, becoming fascinated by the girl, he lingers to make love to her and offers to escort her to her home. She is also interested in him and accepts his attentions.

ACT II

Interior of Minnie's Cabin. The two Indian servants of Minnie crouch in one corner while she listens with pleasure to Johnson's declarations of love. A noise is heard outside the door, and Minnie discovers Rance at the head of a posse. Not desiring that they should find a man at her home, she conceals Johnson, who is only too willing to go into hiding; then she opens the door. Rance tells her that they are searching for a notorious bandit who, they have reason to believe, is concealed on the premises. Minnie indignantly disclaims knowledge of any such person, but after the posse has gone away she turns upon Johnson and upbraids him for deceiving her. The outlaw tells her that he has been reared to this life, but after seeing her he is ready to reform. She will not listen to him, however, and he leaves the cabin. A few paces from the door a shot is heard. Rance has remained in hiding and now seriously wounds him. Johnson drags himself back to the cabin, and Minnie, touched by his plight, conceals him in the loft. Rance returns and demands the fugitive. Minnie again denies knowledge of his whereabouts, but a few drops of blood trickling down from above betray him. In desperation Minnie offers to play a game of poker, the stakes to be the outlaw against her love. The gambling spirit of Rance is aroused and they play. Minnie cheats with the cards and wins. Rance respects his agreement and departs.

ACT III

In the Redwood Forest. Minnie nurses Johnson back to health and he promises to disperse his gang and go to another State, there to live an honest life. Rance, hearing that he has recovered from his wound and is now on his way to join the outlaws, summons his posse and captures him. The miners promise him short shrift at the end of a rope, and are preparing to lynch him from the first convenient tree, when Minnie rushes forward. She pleads with the miners, telling them of Johnson's reformation, and by her influence persuades them to spare his life. Later Rance aids her to effect his escape, and she departs with Johnson for an Eastern State where they are to be married and begin life anew.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Fairy Opera in Three Acts. Music by Engelbert Humperdinck. Book by Adelheid Wette. First produced at Weimar, December 23, and at Munich, December 30, 1893.

SCENE : A German Forest.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

PETER, *a broom-maker* [Baritone].
GERTRUDE, *his wife* [Contralto].
HANSEL, *their son* [Mezzo-Soprano].
GRETEL, *their daughter* [Soprano].
THE CRUNCH WITCH [Mezzo-Soprano].
THE SAND MAN [Soprano].
THE DEW MAN [Soprano].

Fourteen Angels, Children, Elves, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Hansel and Gretel," adapted from a fairy tale by the brothers Grimm, loses nothing of its charm and freshness in this delightful musical setting.[1]

ACT I

The Broom-maker's Cottage. The two children of Peter, the broom-maker, are trying to finish their portion of work while awaiting the return of their parents with supper. But they finally grow so hungry that they lay aside their tasks and dance about to forget their appetites. Their mother, a hasty-tempered woman, finds them thus wasting time, and by way of punishment packs them off into the woods of Ilsenstein to pick berries for supper. After they have run away in terror, Peter comes in greatly pleased over having sold all his brooms. He brings food in plenty. But when he learns that the children have

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Schott and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

gone to Ilsenstein, where the bad Crunch Witch dwells, he is greatly alarmed, and both he and Gertrude hasten off in search of them.

ACT II

In the Forest. The children wander about picking berries, but are so hungry that they eat them as fast as they are picked. They are therefore afraid to return home, and it is growing dark. They sink down weary beneath a large tree and the Sand Man comes and sprinkles his sand of slumber in their eyes. Then in answer to their childish prayer fourteen angels descend a staircase from heaven and assume guard about them.

ACT III

The Witch's Gingerbread Hut. The next morning the Dew Man arouses the children and they are surprised to find themselves in front of the Gingerbread Hut of the Crunch Witch. This is her trap to lure children whom she wishes to devour, but Hansel and Gretel do not know it. They are hungry and break off bits of the delicious house to nibble. Out comes the witch and lays hold upon them. Hansel she locks up in a cage to fatten, but Gretel, who is plump enough, is made to bring water and fuel to help the witch to prepare her feast. The witch is impatient for Hansel to fatten, and meanwhile stirs up her oven fire. As she looks in at the oven door Hansel escapes from the cage, and he and Gretel give the witch a sudden push, sending her headlong inside the oven. The children dance about with glee, eating their fill of sweetmeats. As the witch bakes, the oven cracks open, and at the same time a row of gingerbread children who stood along the façade of the hut turn into real live children, who thank their deliverers for their escape from the witch's spell. The witch herself is baked into the form of a huge gingerbread loaf. Peter and Gertrude now enter, overjoyed to find their children alive, and the opera ends in a general dance and merry-making.

HUGH THE DROVER

A Romantic Ballad Opera in Two Acts. Book by Harold Child. Music by Dr R. Vaughan Williams. First produced at His Majesty's Theatre, London, July 14, 1924.

SCENE : A small town in the Cotswolds.

TIME : The month of April, "about 1812."

CHARACTERS

A Cheap Jack [Baritone].
A Shell-fish Seller [Basso].
A Primrose Seller [Contralto].
A Showman [High Baritone].
A Ballad Seller [Tenor].
Mary, *the Constable's daughter* [Soprano].
Aunt Jane, *his sister* [Contralto].
The Turnkey [Tenor].
The Constable [Basso].
John the Butcher [High Baritone].
A Fool [Baritone].
Hugh the Drover [Tenor].
An Innkeeper [Basso].
A Sergeant [High Baritone].

Townspeople, boys, soldiers, toy-lamb sellers, primrose sellers, morris-dancers, drummers, pipers, etc.

ARGUMENT

This ballad-opera is essentially and intensely English. The score is threaded through with English folk-songs, street-cries, and traditional airs. The colour and atmosphere have the clearness, the brightness, and the directness of an old English engraving, and give a very pleasing picture of rural life in the Cotswold country during the Napoleonic wars.[1]

ACT I

On the outskirts of a small town in the Cotswolds. In the background, an open down, with a church tower barely visible.

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

In the foreground, booths and stalls; cheap jacks, toy-lamb sellers, primrose sellers, and shell-fish sellers ply their trade, and press their wares upon the bystanders. A showman, attended by a drummer and a trumpeter, brings in a large wooden dummy covered by a cloth. It is an effigy of 'Bony-party,' which is to be used as a target in the afternoon and consigned to a bonfire at night.

While the ballad-seller is singing a song with the refrain, "Oh, I'm to be married on a Tuesday morning," Mary comes in, reads the song over his shoulder, and begins to cry. She is comforted by Aunt Jane. Then comes her father the Constable, with John the Butcher, the husband whom he has chosen for her. After the Constable and John have been swept away by the crowd following the morris-dancers, Hugh the Drover enters, mending his whip. To the consternation of Aunt Jane, he and Mary, after an exchange of songs, fall into each other's arms. The Constable is even more upset when he arrives and sees this state of affairs. The showman now returns with his trumpeter and drummer. He is getting up a fight for a prize of twenty pounds. John the Butcher is the obvious local champion, and one-half of the chorus hails him as the 'Cotswold Pride'; the other half accuse him of not fighting fair. Hugh the Drover steps forward, stripped for combat. But what is twenty pounds to him? There is fifty in the bag which he hands over to the Constable. Let Mary be the reward of the winner!

The ensuing fight is a violent one, watched and commented on with keen excitement by the chorus. John, being detected in a foul, narrowly escapes a ducking in the horse-pond. But he has a weapon ready. After being well and truly knocked out, he accuses Hugh the Drover of being a spy in French pay. The gold in his bag, declares John the Butcher, is French gold. The sympathy of the crowd, which has been with Hugh, now veers fiercely to John. Hugh is seized, and a message is sent for the military to come and arrest the spy, amid the curses of the crowd.

ACT II

The Market-place. The Constable's house stands to the right, the Turnkey's to the left. In the centre stands the Inn. Hugh

the Drover is sitting in the stocks. As the curtain rises on the shadowy scene the church clock strikes four. In the Inn are heard the voices of merrymakers, including John the Butcher's. Presently they come trooping forth, jeering at Hugh, whom John cuffs with either fist. After they have withdrawn Mary emerges stealthily from her father's house and comes to Hugh. She has the key of the stocks and soon sets him free. Dawn is breaking. They are just about to steal away together, when the Turnkey and the Constable awake, and a rumour is raised that the spy has escaped. Hugh sits down again as if he were in the stocks, and Mary creeps under his cloak. The two old men, enlightened by Aunt Jane as to their error, accuse each other of raising false alarms, and all three retire. Now Mary has an inspiration. She persuades Hugh to put his feet once more into the stocks, while she herself takes the vacant place, and thrusts her feet through the empty holes beside him. There they are found by the villagers returning at dawn from maying. John is with them. He declares that he will not marry Mary now; what right has a baggage like that to expect a wedding-ring? But when Hugh is underground, he'll keep her—until he is tired of her. There is a revulsion in favour of Mary and Hugh, and the crowd, separating into two camps, fights and struggles for and against John the Butcher. The timely arrival of a sergeant, a bugler, a drummer, and six redcoats delights John and his friends until the Sergeant, being confronted with the alleged spy, warmly greets his old acquaintance, Hugh the Drover. Hugh had once saved the Sergeant's life; now he pays the debt. His Majesty has no more loyal subject or true servant than Hugh, whose horses—for he is an Army contractor—bear the British soldiers to victory. The Sergeant, however, having been summoned from his bed to arrest a spy, is reluctant to return empty-handed. So he and his men seize John the Butcher, and drag him away with them, to "make a soldier of him for the King."

The way is now clear for the union of Hugh and Mary. But they disregard the Constable's plea that they should hire a house and settle down. Hugh's life is a roving one, and henceforth Mary will share it. Singing, and hand in hand, they take the road together.

THE HUGUENOTS

Dramatic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Giacomo Meyerbeer. Book by Eugène Scribe. First produced at the Académie Royale de Musique, Paris, February 29, 1836.

SCENE : Paris and Touraine.

TIME : 1572.

CHARACTERS

MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, *the Princess* [Soprano].
COMTE DE ST BRIS, *a Catholic nobleman* [Basso].
VALENTINE, *his daughter* [Soprano].
RAOUL DE NANGIS, *a Huguenot nobleman* [Tenor].
MARCEL, *his servant* [Basso].
DUC DE NEVERS, *a Catholic nobleman* [Baritone].
URBAIN, *a page* [Mezzo-Soprano].
BOIS ROSÉ, *a Huguenot soldier* [Tenor].

Catholic and Protestant Noblemen and Soldiers, Courtiers, Attendants, Citizens.

ARGUMENT

The Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve forms the historic groundwork of "The Huguenots." The stormy love-affair of two young people belonging to the warring factions is its theme.

ACT I

Dining-Hall in De Nevers' Château. In the interests of peace between the warring Catholic and Protestant parties of France, the Duc de Nevers entertains Raoul de Nangis at a banquet of Catholic noblemen. While at table the diners are asked to toast their ladies, and Raoul tells of a fair unknown, whom he once rescued from a band of roistering students, and for whom he has since searched in vain. Raoul's servant Marcel now enters and warns him of impending danger. Meanwhile De Nevers has been called from the room, and Raoul, looking out of the window, perceives him in conversation with the very lady whom he has been toasting. He now thinks that he has

discovered a *liaison* between the lady (Valentine) and the noble, when in reality she has come only to ask her release from a promise of marriage. A servant presently arrives bearing a message to Raoul from Marguerite de Valois, asking him to come secretly to court.

ACT II

Garden of Marguerite de Valois. Marguerite, like De Nevers, is working for peace, and to this end has invited Raoul to her presence. She is willing to arrange a match between him and Valentine de St Bris, thus uniting two warring houses. To this end, Valentine has broken her betrothal with De Nevers, but is doubtful as to her father's consent. The princess promises to arrange matters with St Bris. Raoul is received at court blindfolded, and when unblinded is delighted with his cordial reception. Catholic and Protestant nobles pledge amity, and Valentine's hand is promised to Raoul. But when he discovers in her the same lady that he saw in De Nevers' garden, he thinks that the duke's discarded mistress is being bestowed upon him, and refuses the alliance. St Bris and De Nevers both wish to avenge this insult, and immediate bloodshed is only averted by the presence of the princess.

ACT III

Banks of the Seine near Paris. Valentine has again accepted the faithful De Nevers and preparations are forward for their wedding. Raoul has sent a challenge to St Bris, and the latter's friends urge him to involve all the Protestants in the quarrel. Raoul is warned of treachery through Marcel and Valentine, but keeps his appointment with St Bris. Marcel thereupon calls upon all the Huguenots in a neighbouring inn, while St Bris summons all the Catholics. A general fight is averted only by Marguerite, and as she is in doubt as to whom to believe, Valentine tells her the whole story. Raoul now learns for the first time of his unjust suspicions, but his knowledge comes too late, as De Nevers appears in a boat to conduct his bride away.

ACT IV

Room in De Nevers' Mansion. It is the Eve of St Bartholomew. Raoul comes to take a last farewell of his lady love, but she

bids him fly from imminent peril. A party of Catholic noblemen now enter and he is forced to take refuge behind a screen. There he overhears the whole conspiracy against his party. St Bris gives commands and marshals his forces. As soon as they have set forth on their bloody quest Raoul declares that he will go out and share the fate of his friends. Valentine clings to him and begs him not to go. From without is heard a fusillade of shots and other sounds of a terrible massacre. Within is love. But he does not hesitate. Finding that she has locked the door, he leaps from the balcony to his fate.

ACT V (Usually Omitted)

Marguerite's Audience Hall. Raoul escapes, wounded, to Marguerite's court and begs her protection for the Huguenots. It is too late, however. Murder is afoot and will not cease till the whole party has perished. Valentine now rushes in and begs him to abjure his faith and thus save himself; but Marcel tells him to remember his oath. The two Huguenots go out to meet their enemies, and Valentine declares she will turn Protestant and die with them.

THE IMMORTAL HOUR

A 'Music Drama' in Two Acts. Music by Rutland Boughton. Libretto arranged from the drama and poems of William Sharp (Fiona MacLeod). First produced at Glastonbury, August 26, 1914.

SCENE: Ireland.

TIME: Ancient Celtic Period.

CHARACTERS

DALUA, *Lord of Shadow* [Basso].
EOCHAIDH, *King of Ireland* [Baritone].
MANUS, *a peasant* [Basso].
AN OLD BARD [Basso].
MIDIR, *a fairy prince* [Tenor].
ETAIN, *wife of Eochaidh, a fairy princess* [Soprano].
MAIVE, *wife of Manus* [Contralto].
SPIRIT VOICE [Contralto].

ARGUMENT

The composer has gone for his inspiration to that mysterious Celtic civilization reflected dimly in the poems of the neo-Celtic school, in the works of Macpherson (Ossian), W. B. Yeats, Alfred Perceval Graves, and William Sharp (Fiona MacLeod). The forms are vague, the tints have the delicate shimmer of sunset cloud, the poetry is plangent and sad. Both gods and mortals seem to be of greater stature than are the men of the modern world.[1]

ACT I

Scene I. A Wood. Dalua, the Lord of Shadow, of the Hidden Way, akin to all the Twilit Gods, the shadow of whose hand brings forgetfulness and his touch death, wanders aimlessly among the trees, holding converse with the voices of the Elemental Spirits. Presently comes Etain, the beautiful princess, strayed from her native fairyland, the Country of the Young.

[1] My thanks are due to Mr Rutland Boughton and Mrs William Sharp, also to the publishers of the opera, Messrs Stainer and Bell, Ltd., for permission to include this synopsis.

Dalua lets the shadow of his hand fall upon her as he tells her that Eochaidh "has wooed the Immortal Hour," and seeks a bride more beautiful than any mortal maid.

Scene 2. The Same. Dalua waits alone for the coming of King Eochaidh, whose horn he has heard afar. When the King appears, and they have spoken together, the Lord of Shadow reveals to the mortal Lord a vision of the Fountain of Beauty. Then, disregarding the distant voices calling him to return to his own place, he follows where the mocking laughter of Dalua leads. Dalua's words, when he holds the stage alone for a moment at the end of this scene, give the clue to his elusive and enigmatical character :

I am the Fool, Dalua,
Dalua !
When men hear me their eyes
Darken ; the shadow of the skies
Droops ; and the keening woman cries,
Dalua . . . Dalua . . . Dalua !

Scene 3. In the Hut of Manus and Maive. Etain has taken shelter with them from the rainstorm beating outside. Eochaidh also seeks a refuge, and finds the lady of his dreams sitting by the log-fire in the hut. He woos her and they plight their troth ; but at the very moment when they exchange their ecstatic vows of love the King hears the far-off, ghostly laughter of Dalua.

ACT II

The great hall of the Dun, or stronghold, of King Eochaidh. A procession of Druids marches round, chanting to the ancient gods of the Celts. Women dance a ritual dance. Etain enters and seats herself upon the throne that awaits her. Then comes a procession of warriors. When their chant ends the King appears and takes his place upon the throne beside Etain. Women, bards, and warriors hail the Queen with song. But she is perplexed by dreams, and her mind is far away ; finally she moves slowly towards the door, like a person in a trance, pauses, looks back, and passes out of sight. The King bids the company disperse. When the warriors are gone and the bards are going, a sudden stir announces the arrival of a stranger.

It is Midir, " of the Dew and the Evening Star," a prince of the Country of the Young, who has come to crave a boon of the King. Eochaidh divines that his visitor is an immortal, and, in his turn, begs a boon of *him*. It is that his love for Etain shall be immortal also. Midir returns a poetical but slightly evasive reply. What *he* craves is the King's leave to kiss the white hand of the Queen, and to sing her " a little echoing song " that he has made. Reluctantly the King consents, and gives the word that Etain shall be awakened. When the Queen appears she is wearing the same dress as in Act I ; she still has a curious dreamy air. At the sight of Midir, a gleam of recognition leaps up in her empty eyes. Eochaidh watches them anxiously. At the King's behest, she gives her hand to Midir ; when he has kissed it, she starts, as if remembering something, and lifts her hand to her forehead. Then Midir sings his song of the beautiful lordly ones who dwell in the hollow of the hills. As he sings he seems to be weaving a spell over the Queen. The King makes a fumbling gesture, as though to break the spell, but Etain turns from him to Midir. Then slowly, with the remembered songs of the land whence they both came, Midir woos Etain to him. Unseen voices take up the echoing song as he retreats backward, holding out his arms to Etain, who slowly follows him. Darkness falls, but against a distant light the appealing form of Eochaidh stands silhouetted, as he cries in despair,

> My dreams, my dreams,
> Give me my dreams !

Then, swiftly and quietly, Dalua enters, and touches the King with his hand. Eochaidh falls dead at his feet.

JOHNNY PLAYS ON

Jazz Opera in Two Acts. Words and Music by Ernst Křenek. First produced at the Neuen Theater, Leipzig, February 18, 1927.

SCENE : An Alpine resort, a large town in Central Europe, Paris.
TIME : The present.

CHARACTERS

MAX, *a Composer* [Tenor].
NIGGER JOHNNY, *a performer in a Jazz Orchestra* [Baritone].
DANIELLO, *a celebrated violinist* [Baritone].
ANITA'S MANAGER [Basso].
A HOTEL PROPRIETOR [Tenor].
A STATION EMPLOYÉ [Tenor].
FIRST POLICEMAN [Tenor].
SECOND POLICEMAN [Baritone].
THIRD POLICEMAN [Basso].
ANITA, *a prima donna* [Soprano].
YVONNE, *a chambermaid* [Soprano].

A chambermaid, a groom, a night-porter in the hotel, a police official, two chauffeurs, a shop girl, a railway porter, guests in the hotel, travellers, etc.

ARGUMENT

This opera enjoys the distinction—if distinction it can be called —of being the first composed in the characteristically modern idiom of jazz. The plot and action are as highly coloured, as violent, and as grotesque as the music, and reflect faithfully the mental atmosphere of a certain school of Continental thought.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. A Rocky Alpine Plateau, overlooking a great glacier. Max, the introspective, melancholic composer, comes to seek inspiration in the grandeur of the Alpine scenery. He encounters Anita, who recognizes him from having seen his photograph

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Universal-Edition, Vienna, for permission to use their text of the opera.

in shop-windows. He explains to her the beauty and significance of the glacier, by which she had been merely appalled before, and is quite willing to renew his explanations at the first, and at every, opportunity.

Scene 2. In Anita's Room. Preparations for departure are visible. She herself is wearing travelling dress. Max, heart-broken at her going away, hands to her the score of his new opera, in which he had promised that the principal *rôle* should be hers. She is going to Paris to rehearse, and he is half-jealous of his own work, which thus drags her from him. Just as she is singing over the Aria from the Second Act, it is announced that the motor has arrived to take her to the station. They part with an ardour of affection which is greater on his side than on hers; Anita goes off, and Max remains disconsolate behind. His farewell gift to her is a ring, destined to play an important part later.

Scene 3. The Corridor of a Hotel in Paris. In the hall below a jazz-band is audible but not visible. Two doors open respectively into Daniello's apartments and into Anita's. Yvonne, the chambermaid, is constantly popping out to listen to the music. When it ceases Johnny enters, with a saxophone in his hand, and a comic hat perched on his head. After some dalliance with Yvonne he asks to be allowed to go into Daniello's room and have a peep at the master's celebrated violin. She is shocked at the request; besides, the violin is not there; Daniello has only just arrived. Daniello now enters, followed by a crowd of admirers clamouring for autographs, and deposits his violin-case ceremoniously in his room, the interior of which is visible when the door is opened. The picturesque Balkan beauty of the violinist makes a visible impression on Yvonne, to the no small annoyance of her admirer, Johnny. When he proceeds towards the restaurant, indicated by a signboard, all follow him except the negro, who, left alone, tries the door of Daniello's room, and finds it locked. Anita enters, carrying a banjo, already seen in Scene 2, and a huge bouquet. Entering *her* room, she hangs the instrument upon a peg outside the door. Johnny, watching her, is deeply smitten by her charms. Anita sits down in view of the audience and writes a telegram to Max :—*Leaving here this evening; will be with you to-morrow.* After handing this to a hotel servant, she is about to proceed

to the restaurant when Johnny advances, and fiercely declares himself. After a first instinctive recoil, she is conscious of a strange attraction in his masterful barbarity. Just as he leads her towards the divan in her room, Yvonne enters, sees them, and swears to be avenged. Daniello also enters, and is shocked to see a beautiful white woman in the arms of a negro. With the aid of a thousand-franc note he is able at once to persuade Johnny to take himself off. He then offers his arm to Anita, and they go to the restaurant together.

Daniello's flame for Anita burns apace. That susceptible lady soon regrets the imminent departure of the train which is to take her back to Max. Finally Daniello disappears into her room. When they are gone, Johnny reappears, and listens at Daniello's door, then at Anita's. Realizing the situation, he opens Daniello's door with the aid of a skeleton key, and abstracts the precious violin. After a moment's cogitation, he removes the banjo from the bag hanging outside Anita's door and places the violin inside, adding his comic hat in order to fill the space left blank by the curve of the banjo. The latter he uses to accompany himself in an ironical song, before he disappears.

Scene 4. The Same, next morning. Anita, in travelling costume, is about to depart, to the consternation of Daniello, whom she informs that " she is Another's." She relents, however, sufficiently to give him a ring as a keepsake. He desires to play her a farewell tune on his violin, and discovers that the violin-case is empty. The proprietor of the hotel is summoned, and immediately dismisses Yvonne. Anita, pitying the girl's distress, takes her into her own service. Daniello vows vengeance upon the elusive *prima donna*, and secretly hands to Yvonne the ring given to him by Anita, with instructions that she shall give it, with his greetings, to her mistress's friend, " the Composer "—he is ignorant of Max's name. The police arrive, and an inquisition is begun. Johnny alarms the hotel proprietor by threatening to leave. He explains that he is the possessor of a very valuable violin, and that there is a man about in the hotel who has a strange mania for violins. Meanwhile Anita's manager arrives, with an American contract, which she signs. Just as she is departing, Johnny points out that she has forgotten the banjo, still hanging on the peg outside her door. He hands it to her as the curtain falls.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Same as the Second Scene in Act I. Anita's room in the Alpine hotel. It is evening. Max impatiently awaits the return of Anita. He rings up the railway station to find if the Paris train is late, and learns that it was 'in' an hour before. Obviously she was not on it! Darkness falls. Anita has not come!

Scene 2. The Same, next morning. Max, who has slept all night in his chair, awakes with a start from a very pleasant dream. Anita suddenly appears, and he gazes at her in a dazed manner. She is affectionate, but avoids his glance. As she moves about the room, divesting herself of her cloak, banjo-case, etc., she tells him that she has signed an American contract. Max is profoundly depressed both by her manner and by the news. She urges him not to take everything tragically, and tells him that during her absence she has learnt that self-expression is the highest good. When Max is once more alone, Yvonne approaches him, tells him the story of Daniello's vanished violin, and hands him the fatal ring, with Daniello's message: "My greetings to the composer—this is by way of a bet." Max becomes frantic with jealousy and despair. After he has dashed away, the face of Johnny appears for a moment at the window, and he then climbs in, to the astonishment of Yvonne. He notices Max's ring in her hand, and she tells him it was given to her by a beautiful gentleman, Daniello. He jumps to the conclusion that she has betrayed his trick with the precious violin, but she is able to reassure him, they are reconciled, and he proceeds to extricate the violin from the banjo-case before her astonished eyes. He then disappears as he came, through the window, bearing the violin in one hand and his comic hat in the other. When Anita returns, she hears with alarm from Yvonne of the episode of the ring, and Max's abrupt exit.

Scene 3. The Glacier, as in Scene 1 of the First Act. It is night. The half-distracted Max invokes the spirit of the glacier, in which he once found inspiration and peace of mind. A mysterious radiance begins to emanate from the hitherto dark glacier, and its voice—made audible in a chorus of female voices 'off'—demands who thus disturbs its eternal repose.

He desires the glacier to take him to itself; but the glacier sternly replies that he is a man, and must fulfil his destiny. It bids him have courage, and face life again without fear; then it subsides into darkness and silence once more. Lights now appear on the terrace of the hotel, hitherto in obscurity. Guests are seen and heard, laughing and drinking, and then Anita's voice is heard issuing from a wireless loud-speaker, and singing the Aria from Max's opera, the same which she sang in the First Act. The song is succeeded on the loud-speaker by a lively jazz-band. Some guests begin to dance; others exclaim joyfully "That's Johnny's band!" Daniello emerges from the hotel with two ladies; great excitement when he is recognized. He has never recovered from the shock of the loss of his beloved violin, and has come to the Alps for a nerve-cure. The jazz band strikes up again, and he recognizes the tones of the lost instrument. Frantic with delight, he hurries into the hotel to send telegrams and summon the police.

Scene 4. A Street in a Town, with cross-roads in the centre. Johnny enters much perturbed. He has seen some detectives in the hotel where he is at present performing. He has bought a ticket for Amsterdam, *en route* for America, and is going back to Alabama. In pulling out his handkerchief he lets fall the ticket in question, and, leaving it on the ground, departs for the railway station. Three policemen now enter, seeking Johnny. One of them sees and picks up the fallen railway ticket, and they all rush away to the station.

Scene 5. A Railway Station, with booking-office, clock, bridge, signals, and all the appropriate properties. Max enters, followed by a porter bearing his luggage. He is determined to see Anita once more, even if he should have to go to America. The clock marks 11.44. A large indicator shows that the Amsterdam train leaves at 11.58. Johnny arrives, bearing his violin-case. He thinks he is safe, but he soon catches sight of the pursuing police. He hastily deposits his case on the top of Max's luggage, and vanishes. The station begins to fill; the three police officers enter, spy the case, learn that the luggage is Max's, and pounce upon him. They drag him into a door marked "office." Immediately afterwards Anita appears, accompanied by her manager, a telegram in her hand. She is looking for Max, the sender of it. Yvonne enters, seeking

Johnny. Then comes Daniello, much excited, and muttering revenge. When he sees Anita he informs her that Max is in the hands of the police, accused of stealing his violin. Yvonne, overhearing and knowing the truth, is overwhelmed. But she hesitates to obey her mistress when she tells her to go and make inquiries of the police. Daniello exults. Yvonne, relenting, is about to obey her mistress, but Daniello interposes, and will not let her go. In the struggle which follows, she pushes him onto the line. The Amsterdam train steams in. Universal horror.

Scene 6. Outside a Barred Gateway, where a policeman keeps watch, going to and fro. A large motor stands in front of it, a police chauffeur asleep on the box. Johnny tiptoes in, seeking the precious violin. Yvonne emerges from the barred gate, and urges Johnny to exculpate Max. This Johnny is willing to do, if it can be done without relinquishing the violin. He promptly stuns the slumbering chauffeur with a heavy blow, rams his policeman's cap on to his own woolly head, and sits at the wheel, concealing the prostrate form of his predecessor. The three police officers emerge, escorting Max, and they all take their places in the car, which, by a clever manipulation of the backcloth, is made to appear as if it were passing along a lighted street. Max suddenly decides that he *must* see Anita again, and calls out to the supposed chauffeur to drive back to the railway station. Johnny swings the car round, flings two of the bewildered policemen out, and silences the third with a blow of his fist. There is a loud roar, and the car disappears.

Scene 7. Back in the railway station. Anita is visible in the doorway of a compartment in the rear coach of the Amsterdam train. Yvonne and the manager are gazing in every direction. The clock is almost upon 11.58. Anita is greatly agitated. Just as the train is about to start, Max appears on the foot-bridge above, dashes down on to the platform, and leaps into the carriage. The train vanishes. Johnny now appears on the foot-bridge, violin in hand, and perches himself on the arm of the signal, where he strikes up a lively jazz tune. Travellers appear from right and left, and begin to dance. Jazz-coloured lights flicker over the fantastic scene. As the clock marks twelve, the hands vanish, and the clock itself begins to sink

slowly to the ground. When it is level with the arm of the signal, Johnny jumps on to it, and descends. When it touches the earth, it changes into a terrestrial globe, which begins to revolve. Johnny stands on the North Pole, fiddling vigorously. In a final tableau, the first and third policemen draw across the stage a curtain painted with the emblems of tragedy and comedy, before which appear Anita, Max, the Manager, Yvonne, Daniello, and the hotel proprietor, singing in chorus that Johnny has played, and they have danced to his music, and that life itself is but a comedy. The curtains part, and Johnny emerges, " playing on."

THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

[*Le Jongleur de Notre Dame.*] *Miracle Play in Three Acts. Music by Jules Massenet. Book by Maurice Lena. First produced at the Theatre at Monte Carlo, February* 18, 1902.

SCENE : Clugny in Burgundy.

TIME : The Fourteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

JEAN, *a juggler* [Tenor].
BONIFACE, *a cook* [Baritone].
PRIOR OF THE MONASTERY [Basso].
POET, *a monk* [Tenor].
PAINTER, *a monk* [Baritone].
MUSICIAN, *a monk* [Baritone].
SCULPTOR, *a monk* [Basso].

Two Angels, apparition of the Virgin, Monks, Cavaliers, Citizens.

ARGUMENT

" The Juggler of Notre Dame " is styled by its librettist a ' Miracle ' play, but is only such in the sense that it requires a miracle to give value to its dénouement. Its theme is mediæval and monastic, and there is no ' love interest.' [1]

ACT I

The Clugny Market Place. During a market day in which all the villagers gather to barter and make merry, Jean the juggler wanders about forlorn and hungry. His tricks are time-worn, his songs feeble, and when presently he tries to perform for the crowd they only jeer at him. Finally, to arouse them he sings a sacrilegious song, " Alleluia to Wine," in which they roar out a chorus. The Prior of a neighbouring monastery is shocked, and comes out to anathematize the crowd. All scatter, leaving Jean, who is really a good-hearted fellow, to bear the

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Heugel, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

blame of the Church. The Prior is finally touched by his penitence, and pardons him, but urges him to join the band of monks. Jean does not wish to relinquish his liberty, but the sight of the cook's donkey going by with panniers laden with food is too much for his hungry stomach, and he consents.

ACT II

The Monastery Study. The busy monks labour at their chosen vocations as poets, musicians, painters, scribes, sculptors, and what not, but Jean feels himself out of it. He cannot even pray to the Virgin because he knows no Latin, and he fears that she will not listen to any other tongue. Meanwhile, the other monks have been quarrelling as to which of their vocations has the most merit. The cook alone consoles Jean by relating to him the legend of the humble sage plant, useful in cooking, and Jean resolves to serve the Church in his own humble way.

ACT III

The Chapel. Jean lays aside his monastic dress and puts on his juggler's apparel. He goes before the life-size figure of the Virgin, in the chapel, and since he does not know anything else, he prepares to offer her—a juggling performance! Spreading out his shabby outfit, he performs his tricks and sings his songs, first begging pardon if they do not suit her. In the midst of his performance, the monks enter to celebrate high mass. They recoil in horror at this sacrilege and are ready to lay violent hands upon the poor juggler, when suddenly a miracle happens. The image of the Virgin becomes animated, the face smiles, and the arms stretch out in protection and benediction. The monks draw back in awe, and Jean, radiant, exclaims, "Now at last I shall know Latin," and breathes his last. Angels appear, and the Prior, crossing himself, says: "We have had a saint among us!"

THE KING'S HENCHMAN

A Lyric Drama in Three Acts. Music by Deems Taylor. Book by Edna St Vincent Millay. First produced at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, February 17, 1927.

SCENE : England.

TIME : First half of the Tenth Century A.D.

CHARACTERS

EADGAR OF WESSEX, *King of England* [Baritone].
AETHELWOLD, *Earl of East Anglia, friend and foster-brother to Eadgar* [Tenor].
ORDGAR, *Thane of Devon* [Basso].
DUNSTAN, *Archbishop of Canterbury* [Tenor].
MACCUS, *Master of the Horse to Aethelwold* [Basso].
THORED, *Master of the Household to Ordgar* [Baritone].
HWITA, *Cup-bearer to Eadgar* [Tenor or Soprano].
AELFRIDA, *Ordgar's daughter* [Soprano].
ASE, *her sewing-woman* [Mezzo-Soprano].

Nobles and ladies of Eadgar's Court, Men-at-arms, Devonshire villagers, servants of Eadgar's Court and of Ordgar's household.

ARGUMENT

This opera was written as the result of a commission given to the composer by the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York. It is noteworthy as the most important successful modern opera by an American composer, and also on account of Mr Deems Taylor's well-known interest in negro music.[1]

ACT I

The Great Hall of King Eadgar's Castle, Winchester. The hour is before dawn, and the season is early autumn. A banquet is in progress. Maccus sings of the defeat and overthrow of Cynewulf, accompanying his song on the harp. The widowed

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs J. Fischer and Bro., New York and Birmingham, for permission to use their text of the opera.

King is minded to take as his second wife Aelfrida, daughter of Ordgar, Thane of Devon. As his ambassador in quest of her hand he has chosen his foster-brother and closest friend, Aethelwold, whose indifference to the charms of women is proverbial at Court. Owing to difficulties in ecclesiastical affairs at home, Eadgar cannot himself ride into Devonshire a-wooing. Aethelwold is reluctant to go. What if he should bring home a bride displeasing to the King? In that case, returns Eadgar, Aethelwold would have to marry the maid himself. The King and his henchman pledge each other solemnly in the sacred cup of the Romsey nuns that each will be loyal to each. Dunstan gives his blessing to the departing messenger, though he does not look with approval on his errand. Aethelwold mounts his horse and rides away, sped by the farewells of the Court.

ACT II

A Forest in Devonshire, wrapped in fog. It is All-Hallows Eve—October 31st. Aethelwold and Maccus have lost their way. Maccus leaves his master in order to reconnoitre. When he has gone, Aethelwold composes himself to slumber, and Aelfrida and Ase enter, the latter bearing a lamp. Aelfrida has come into the forest to work a Hallowe'en spell in order to find what manner of man she is to wed. While she chants her incantation the fog begins to clear; when she has finished, she sees Aethelwold asleep under a tree. She promptly falls in love with him, though deeming him a ghost. She kisses him, and as he wakes, darts away. He challenges her to come forth. And it is his turn to love at first sight. They exchange passionate kisses and impetuous vows. At the voice of the returning Ase, she runs off, but not until she has plunged Aethelwold into despair by telling him her name. He resolves to return forthwith to Winchester. But when she comes back seeking and calling him, his resolution breaks. He takes Maccus aside and bids him go and report to Eadgar that Ordgar's daughter, though a fair maid enough, is not fair enough to be his Queen, but that his royal consent is craved to a marriage between her and Aethelwold. The wording of the message makes it appear that Aethelwold's motives are chiefly mercenary. Ordgar's lands are wide, and the King's henchman "sparing the King's love has little else beside."

ACT III

The Hall of Ordgar's House on the Devonshire Coast. The time is a sunny morning in the ensuing spring. Aelfrida is busy with household tasks. Aethelwold has lost much of his former breezy energy. Aelfrida confesses that she is weary of her father's house, and longs to go away and dwell with her husband in some place that shall be their own. Ordgar appears. He is anxious that Aethelwold should commend him to Eadgar as a suitable person to be Ealdorman of all Wessex west of Wiltshire. Aethelwold and Aelfrida determine to betake themselves to Ghent in Flanders. Then suddenly Maccus bursts in breathless. King Eadgar is at the gate! In his distress Aethelwold tells Aelfrida for the first time that he was the King's messenger, and that but for their encounter in the forest she would now have been Queen of England. He bids her, if she loves him, darken her skin with walnut-juice and dull her hair with meal, and keep her bower that none may see her save Aethelwold and Eadgar, until the King be thence again. Ase counsels her mistress to disobey. A crowd of villagers appear outside, eager to see the King. Ordgar and other Devon worthies advance to greet the royal visitor. Eadgar comes, and his first thoughts and words are all for his friend and henchman, Aethelwold, in whom he at once descries a strange change. Aethelwold says that his wife is sick. Will the King deign to visit her in her bower? Eadgar assents, and they are about to withdraw together, when Aelfrida suddenly appears, radiant and dazzling, wearing her richest robes and jewels. At the vision, Eadgar perceives that Aethelwold has played him false, and he staggers under the blow. In an agony of despair, Aethelwold stabs himself to the heart. Too late Aelfrida realizes what she has done. Eadgar, smitten with sorrow for his friend and companion, tells her bitterly that she has not tears enough in her narrow heart to weep worthily for Aethelwold. Then he bids his retainers bear away all that is mortal of the man who "this day hath . . . dared two Kings, myself and Death."

KÖNIGSKINDER

[*King's Children.*] *Fairy Opera in Three Acts. Music by Engelbert Humperdinck. Book by Ernst Rosmer, after the fairy tale by Elsa Bernstein. First produced at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, December 28, 1910.*

SCENE : Hellabrun, in the Mountains of Germany.

TIME : Vaguely in the Middle Ages.

CHARACTERS

THE KING'S SON [Tenor].
THE GOOSE-GIRL, *a king's daughter* [Soprano].
THE WITCH [Contralto].
THE JONGLEUR [Baritone].
THE WOODCUTTER [Basso].
THE BESOM-MAKER [Basso].
HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER [Soprano].
THE INNKEEPER [Baritone].
HIS DAUGHTER [Soprano].
THE OLDEST TOWN COUNCILLOR [Basso].
ANOTHER TOWN COUNCILLOR [Basso].
A TAILOR [Baritone].
A STABLE-GIRL [Soprano].
AN INN-GIRL [Soprano].
A SERVANT [*male*] [Basso].
A GATE-KEEPER [Basso].

Villagers, Children, etc.

ARGUMENT

This opera, "King's Children," has something of the wistful quality of one of Hans Andersen's longer fairy-tales. The underlying allegory is not obscure. Love makes the beloved more than royal : the world does not always recognize King's children for what they are. The germ of the story may perhaps be found in the fine old German folksong "Die Königskinder," where the part of the witch is played by a false nun, the King's son is drowned, and the King's daughter, heartbroken, flings herself into the sea.[1]

[1] My thanks are due to Herr Max Brockhaus, Leipzig, for permission to use his text of the opera.

ACT I

In the Forest. The Witch's hut is in the background. A pool, surrounded by lilies, is vaguely visible. The Goose-girl, who, unknown to herself, is a King's daughter, has been brought up by the Witch in the depths of the forest. She crowns herself with flowers, and admires her own reflection in the water. While she is thus engaged, the King's son—not, of course, her brother, but the son of another King—driven forth by enemies from his inheritance, enters, wearing faded huntsman's clothes, and carrying a bundle on a stick over his shoulder. The wind blows away the Goose-girl's crown of flowers, but the King's son takes a golden crown from his bundle and offers her that instead. They plight their troth, and she makes ready to follow him, but the Witch's spell begins to work and she cannot move. The boughs and branches catch her feet, the geese cackle round her, and will not let her go. The King's son does not understand. He parts from her in sorrow and anger. She has not told him about the Witch, nor about the mystic bread which she must help her to bake inside the hut, bread which will never grow stale and yet will bring death to them that eat thereof. When the King's son has gone, she gives the golden crown to the great grey goose, who hides it in the bushes. "Oh," she cries, "if only she, too, were a King's child!" A deputation arrives from Hellabrun to ask the Witch's advice. It consists of a Jongleur, or wandering juggler-fiddler, a Woodcutter, and a Besom-maker. Their King is dead, and the Councillors of the City seek guidance as to his successor. Who is to occupy the empty throne? The Witch tells them that their rightful sovereign will be the person who enters the city gates at noon the next day. The Jongleur tells the Goose-girl that *she* is a King's child, too. The grey goose brings back the golden crown, and the girl sets it on her head. She prays to the souls of her father and mother, and a star falls from heaven into the cup of a great lily. When she has run off with the Jongleur, the Witch strikes at the lily with her wand, and the light of its golden cup is quenched.

ACT II

The City Gates of Hellabrun. The daughter of the Innkeeper looks with a not unfavourable eye upon the King's son, who

seeks service with her father, and is given the post of swineherd. The little daughter of the Besom-maker comes and makes friends with the King's son, and they play Ring-a-roses together. As the hour of noon approaches the townsfolk, mindful of the Witch's prophecy, gather round the gates. As midday strikes, the gates are flung open, and the Goose-girl enters with the Jongleur. The King's son hails her as his Queen, but the people jeer at them both. The Jongleur asks if they cannot see the crown on her head ? She must have stolen it, they reply. The children, all but the Besom-maker's little girl, begin to chase and catch the Goose-girl's geese. Only that little girl believes the Jongleur when he proclaims that these two strangers are Kings' children. The King's son and the Goose-girl are driven forth. The Oldest Town Councillor sees the Besom-maker's child weeping. Is it because her broom is broken ? No, says the child simply, she is weeping for the King and his wife.

ACT III

The Forest in Midwinter. The Witch's hut in the background. Snow falling. The Witch has been burnt, and the Jongleur has taken up his abode in her hut, hoping always for the return of the Kings' children. The Woodcutter and the Besom-maker have come to visit him. All the little ones of Hellabrun are now convinced that the King's son and the Goose-girl are the rightful King and Queen. They cluster round the Jongleur, who promises that in the spring they shall go with him in quest of them. He wanders off into the forest with the children. After his departure, the King's son enters, half-dragging, half-carrying the Goose-girl. They knock at the door of the hut, begging for bread, but are driven off by the Woodcutter and the Besom-maker. Cowering in the snow, they remember their happy summer days in the mountains. Then from his bundle the King's son takes the golden crown, and, though the Goose-girl cries aloud that a King must never sell his crown, he breaks it asunder and offers the two halves to the men in the hut in exchange for some bread. They give him a loaf which the Besom-maker has found in an old cupboard. It is the magic loaf, to eat which is death. When the King's son and the Goose-girl have eaten it, they lie down, clasped in each

other's arms, and dream that it is summer again, and that the snow is white blossom shaken from the trees. And the snow falls ever faster, drifting over them as they lie dead. In the red light of the sunset the Jongleur and the children emerge from the forest. And he tells them that here are the King and Queen, found again, but lost for ever now. He will sing one more song, his last, and then break his fiddle and drop it into the grave of the *Königskinder*.

THE LEPER'S FLUTE

Opera in Four Acts. Music by Ernest Bryson. Words by Ian Colvin. First produced at Glasgow, October 15, 1926.

SCENE : Cape Town.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

CORNELIS VAN BREDA, *owner of Oranjizicht* [Tenor].
MAURITS PASQUES DE CHAVONNES, *Governor of the Cape of Good Hope* [Basso].
THE REVEREND PIETER SLOTSBOO, *Predikant of Cape Town* [Basso].
CAPTAIN DOMINIQUE PASQUE DE CHAVONNES, *Commandant of the Garrison, and Brother of the Governor* [Baritone].
A LEPER, *known as* ANGRIA, *actually a pirate prince from Malabar* [Baritone].
MADAM (MEVROUW) VAN BREDA, *mother of Cornelis* [Contralto].
SENHORA JUANITA DE CASTRO [Contralto].
JONGEVROUW MARIE VAN DER MEER, a *neighbour* [Soprano].
ABDUL, *a fruit merchant.*

Malay Slaves, etc.

ARGUMENT

At the time when the action of this sombre and poignant opera takes place Cape Town, governed by the Dutch East India Company, was the haunt of many pirates, both Indian and European.[1]

ACT I

The Courtyard of the Oranjizicht, mansion of the Van Bredas. A glimpse is caught of a flute-playing beggar (Angria, the Leper). Then the Governor appears with his friend the Predikant, his hostess, Madam Breda, and a young neighbour, Marie. They all await the return from Holland of Cornelis, the owner of the place, who is presently welcomed home. A tender passage follows with Marie, whom he has left a girl

[1] My thanks are due to Mr Ian Colvin for permission to include this synopsis of his libretto.

and finds a woman. Then he speaks with enthusiasm of his violin, which he is about to play, when the Governor's brother, Dominique, breaks in upon the party, bringing with him a dark stranger, Juanita. After the violin solo, Juanita dances, Madam looking on with disapproval and her son with growing admiration. Juanita's triumph is interrupted by the sound of the flute, which fills her with evident dismay ; but she recovers herself, and by the end of the scene has made a captive of Cornelis.

ACT II

The Courtyard decorated for the betrothal of Cornelis and Juanita. His mother and the Governor make their last attempt to dissuade him from his folly : the argument is interrupted by the sound of the flute ; then Dominique carries in the fainting Juanita. The guests arrive and their attitude faintly suggests the general disapproval of the Dutch gentlefolk—all save Marie, who wishes Juanita and Cornelis happiness. Juanita, racked by the events of the evening, has a passionate scene with Cornelis, and in a fit of jealousy breaks his violin on the floor of the courtyard.

ACT III

Scene 1. In the Market Square of Cape Town. The Leper squats on the ground, his flute in his hands and his begging-bowl in front of him, and draws to him by his music the various persons of the drama. He first denounces Juanita to the Governor as the daughter and spy of a notorious pirate ; then Juanita is drawn from her doorway by his melody, and, in the terrible dialogue ensuing, it appears that Angria, once a prince in Malabar, is her cast-off lover ; in revenge for the wrongs she has done him, he is compassing her doom. Lastly Cornelis comes in, distraught by jealousy and the loss of his violin. He takes from the Leper the fatal gift of the flute, which he puts to his lips.

Scene 2. The Market Place at night. Marie enters to warn Juanita of her approaching fate, and runs off at the approach of Dominique, who gives Juanita similar warning, and offers to take her away beyond the reach of his brother's power. Cornelis

enters, and jealous of Dominique, draws his sword upon him. They fight; the soldier dexterously disarms the youth, and goes out singing a swaggering song. Then Juanita, finding the flute in her lover's bosom, discovers that he has been infected with leprosy, and kills herself, just as the Governor's soldiers rush in to arrest her.

ACT IV

The courtyard of the mansion has been ravaged by a storm. Cornelis, now a leper, sits on the low wall, looking out to sea. The Governor and Predikant talk together of his terrible fate. Then Madam and Marie enter, and it appears that Marie still loves Cornelis, and that too late he has found his love for Marie. He is resolved to spend the rest of his life in a hermitage which he has built deep in the woods of the mountain. He bids farewell to Marie and walks out through the trees. Marie, alone, listens to the sound of his flute until it is lost in the distance.

THE LILY OF KILLARNEY

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Sir Julius Benedict. Words by D. Boucicault and John Oxenford. First produced at Covent Garden, February 8, 1862.

SCENE : Ireland.

TIME : Early Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

HARDRESS CREGAN [Tenor].
CORRIGAN, *a ' middle man '* [Basso].
MYLES, *in love with Eily* [Tenor].
O'MOORE [Basso].
DANNY, *a boatman* [Baritone].
FATHER TOM [Basso].
EILY O'CONNOR, *the ' Colleen Bawn,' the Lily of Killarney* [Soprano].
MRS CREGAN, *Hardress's mother* [Contralto].
SHEELAH [Contralto].
ANN CHUTE, *an heiress* [Soprano].

ARGUMENT

This opera is redeemed from a sickly sentimentality by a certain light-hearted, pseudo-Irish vivacity in some of the numbers, notably the fox-hunting chorus in Act I. The " Colleen Bawn " song in Act III was—and has not ceased to be—a firm favourite with lovers of the simple and emotional lyric.[1]

ACT I

Scene I. At Tore Cregan, the ancestral home of Hardress. Cheerful guests are hailing the ' bachelor ' heir, little recking that he is secretly married to the beautiful Colleen Bawn, the Lily of Killarney. They go off to an impromptu moonlight race between the horses of two of the guests. Mrs Cregan is now left alone, and to her enters Corrigan, an ambitious and

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Boosey and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

yet cringing upstart who holds a mortgage on the Tore Cregan estates. He is anxious to bring about a match between young Hardress and the heiress, Ann Chute. Danny the boatman is now heard singing 'off.' Corrigan informs Mrs Cregan that he is waiting to row her son over the water to visit the Colleen Bawn.

Scene 2. In Eily's Cottage. Father Tom urges her to persuade Hardress to proclaim their marriage to the world, but when Hardress arrives *he* asks her to give up the certificate of their marriage altogether. Myles and the priest intervene, and Hardress departs in wrath.

ACT II

Scene 1. At Tore Cregan. Hardress is reluctantly wooing Ann Chute, while Corrigan is inflicting his attentions upon Mrs Cregan. Danny determines to remove the cause of all the trouble, Eily, the Colleen Bawn. He tells Mrs Cregan that if she can give him one of her son's gloves as a token, he can bring about the happiness of the family. Armed with the glove, he departs for the home of Eily.

Scene 2. Eily's Hut. Primed with strong drink, Danny comes to put his scheme into execution. Myles tries to dissuade Eily from going with him, but the sight of Hardress's glove convinces her that all is well. Danny rows her to a lonely cave.

Scene 3. Outside a Cave on the Lake. Danny, thinking that he has Eily at his mercy, tells her that she must either surrender her marriage certificate to him or take it with her to the bottom of the lake. Myles, who uses the cave as a refuge, comes on the scene at the critical moment. Mistaking Danny for an otter, he shoots him. Then he proceeds to rescue Eily and bear her away with him.

ACT III

At Tore Cregan. Hardress, believing Eily to be dead, is about to be married to Miss Chute. But Danny Mann, wounded to death, but not yet dead, makes a dying confession of the plot against Eily, and suspicion falls on Hardress as the instigator of the dastardly scheme. On the wedding morning the vindictive Corrigan arranges that the soldiery shall come and arrest the

bridegroom. Then Myles produces Eily, alive, and Hardress acknowledges her as his lawful wife. Mrs Cregan relates how it was she who gave the glove to Danny. The opera ends with the joy of Hardress and Eily, and the discomfiture of Corrigan. Myles consoles Miss Chute with the reminder that he, too, is doomed to love in vain.

LOHENGRIN

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Weimar, August 28, 1850.

SCENE : On the banks of the Scheld, Flanders.

TIME : The Tenth Century.

CHARACTERS

HENRY I, *King of Germany* [Basso].
FREDERICK OF TELRAMUND, *a nobleman* [Baritone].
ORTRUD, *his wife* [Contralto].
ELSA OF BRABANT [Soprano].
LOHENGRIN, *the Knight of the Swan* [Tenor].
HERALD [Baritone].

Courtiers, Soldiers, Citizens, Servants.

ARGUMENT

The basis of "Lohengrin" is a legend connected with one of the Knights of the Holy Grail. These knights are pledged to succour the oppressed at any time, and it is in an adventure of this sort that the Knight of the Swan appears.

ACT I

The Banks of the Scheld. According to ancient custom, the King of Germany holds a public outdoor court in which he hears complaints and tries all cases which may be brought before him. Frederick of Telramund, an unscrupulous nobleman, appears before this court and claims the Duchy of Brabant. He has been acting as regent during the minority of Godfrey and his sister Elsa, and now claims that the maiden has made away with her brother in order to seize the dukedom. Elsa is summoned to defend herself and declares her innocence. She is willing to leave the merits of her cause to a trial by combat, stating that she has seen in her dreams a glorious knight who promised to come to her assistance. Frederick agrees to meet any champion she may secure, and while the Herald issues the

summons Elsa sinks on her knees in prayer. At first no answer is received, but on the bugle sounding again a magic boat drawn by a swan is seen far up the river. It draws to the shore, and a knight clad in glittering armour steps forth and announces himself Elsa's champion. He speedily overcomes Frederick, but grants him his life, and asks Elsa's hand in marriage. Only one condition is interposed. She is not to ask the knight's name and whence he came. She consents, and there is general rejoicing at the happy outcome of events.

ACT II

The Courtyard and Cathedral. On the night before the wedding of Elsa and her champion, Frederick and Ortrud, his wife, wander into the deserted courtyard. They have been banished from the country, but Ortrud revives her husband's drooping spirits by her plans to deceive Elsa, whom she is to persuade to ask the forbidden question. Elsa receives Ortrud out of pity and grants her shelter.

Morning dawns and the people assemble. When all is ready for the ceremony and Elsa and her attendants are about to enter the church, Ortrud steps forward and accuses the knight of being a magician. Frederick also mounts the church steps and proclaims his wrongs. But the knight is undaunted, and, Elsa once more declaring her confidence in him, the procession continues.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Bridal Chamber. Maidens precede the bridal couple singing the praises of the bride. Elsa and the knight enter, and as they sit by the open window renewing their love vows, Elsa, who has not been able to get Ortrud's scoffing words out of her head, begins to chide her husband for concealing his identity from her. He tries to prevent her from asking the fatal question, but she persists. At this moment a band of conspirators headed by Telramund rushes into the room, but the knight easily defeats them all and strikes Telramund lifeless. He then bids the attendants bear the body before the King and promises to follow and tell all.

Scene 2. The Banks of the Scheld. The Court of the King

is again assembled as the monarch prepares to set forth for war. The body of Frederick is borne in, and the knight follows it. He defends his act and then publicly reveals his identity. He is Lohengrin, a Knight of the Holy Grail and the son of Parsifal. Now he must return to the brotherhood, despite the tears of the penitent Elsa. The swan boat reappears, and as the knight kneels in prayer the swan disappears in the stream and in its place steps forth Godfrey, Elsa's lost brother. Ortrud confesses that it was her magical arts which caused him to assume this shape. A fluttering dove takes the place of the swan and conveys the boat and Lohengrin on their return journey, while Elsa clasps her brother in her arms but weeps for the loss of her husband.

LOUISE

Dramatic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Gustave Charpentier. Book by the Composer. First produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, February 2, 1900.

SCENE : Paris.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

LOUISE, *a sewing girl* [Soprano].
HER FATHER [Baritone].
HER MOTHER [Contralto].
JULIEN, *an artist* [Tenor].
IRMA, *a sewing girl* [Contralto].
THE KING OF FOOLS, *a Bohemian* [Baritone].
ERRAND GIRL [Mezzo-Soprano].
FOREWOMAN [Contralto].

Sewing Girls, Bohemians, Pedlars, Rag-pickers, Grisettes, Gamins, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Louise " may be regarded as a bit of canvas belonging to the varied panorama of Paris. It depicts home life among the lower working classes as they come in daily contact with the underworld of the great city. Louise herself personifies the struggle between love and duty ; between the instincts of virtue and the desire to be free.[1]

ACT I

Garret of a Paris Tenement. Louise, a sewing girl, has fallen in love with Julien, a young artist, whose studio balcony adjoins her window. Julien sings charming serenades but is an improvident bohemian like the rest of his class. He nevertheless wishes to marry Louise, and has written to her father asking for her hand, but her mother, a hard-working, practical woman,

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Heugel, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

is violently opposed to the match. She overhears the lovers making plans from their adjacent windows and parts them without ceremony. Louise's father returns home wearied from his day's work, but after supper and a pipe he feels in good humour with the world. He reads Julien's letter, and the girl pleads her lover's cause, while her mother as strongly opposes it. They quarrel, but the father endeavours to act as peacemaker, although he points out to his daughter the improvidence of Julien. Louise is downcast but promises to try to forget him.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Road to Montmartre. It is early morning and Paris is waking up. The last of the prowlers—beggars, thieves, bohemians, and street-walkers—are still to be seen. Rag-pickers and newsboys are busy. Servants open windows and shake rugs. Presently Julien and some of his bohemian friends appear. He is planning to elope with Louise, since he cannot obtain her father's consent. Meanwhile she comes by on her way to the shop, escorted by her mother. Julien conceals himself until the latter has gone away, then endeavours to persuade the girl to come with him. She refuses and continues on her way to work.

Scene 2. A Dressmaker's Workshop. Louise and many of her companions are seen busily at work sewing and fitting garments over lay figures. They ply their needles and machines and sing carelessly. One or two tell Louise that she does not look well. Presently a serenader's voice is heard; it is Julien, who will not go away. At first the girls applaud, and then his continued singing grows monotonous. Finally Louise complains of being ill and leaves the room, but the others laugh maliciously as they notice that she is going up the street with Julien.

ACT III

A Cottage on Montmartre. Julien and Louise have set up an establishment for themselves without consent of either parents or the Church. But they justify their conduct on the score of love. They are children of the great city and have a right to be free. After they have retired within the cottage a group of laughing bohemians pauses before the cottage. One of them

hangs lanterns from its door and windows. The crowd gathers and the lovers are summoned forth. Then the King of Fools makes an address and crowns Louise as the Muse of Montmartre. In the midst of this revelry a woman pushes her way through the throng, which scatters to right and left. It is Louise's mother come to plead with her daughter. She no longer quarrels, but she says that the father is ill and only Louise's presence can help him. Afterwards she will be allowed to return to Julien. The lovers separate upon these terms, and the girl goes with her mother.

ACT IV

The Garret Room. Louise finds, after she returns home, that she is being held a prisoner. She must sew at home. Her father still treats her affectionately, but insists upon her remaining with them. She says she is a grown woman and has the right to be free. He points out that the freedom she claims is the first step to ruin. She is at first sullen, then defiant to both father and mother, and finally seizes her shawl and thrusts her way past them to the door. Her mother rushes to the window to call her, while her father pursues her as far as the staircase. But she is gone out of their lives. The old workman shakes his fist at the city which has claimed another victim. " Oh, Paris ! " he cries out, heart-broken.

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Tragic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Gaetano Donizetti. Book by Cammarano, after Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor." First produced at the San Carlo, Naples, September 26, 1835, and at London, April 5, 1838.

SCENE : Scotland.

TIME : 1700.

CHARACTERS

HENRY ASHTON, *of Lammermoor* [Basso].
LUCY ASHTON, *his sister* [Soprano].
EDGAR, *of Ravenswood* [Tenor].
LORD ARTHUR BUCKLAW, *friend of Ashton* [Tenor].
NORMAN, *a follower of Ashton* [Tenor].
RAYMOND, *chaplain to Ashton* [Basso].
ALICE, *attendant to Lucy* [Soprano].

Friends and retainers of the Ashtons, Villagers, etc.

ARGUMENT

The story of "Lucia di Lammermoor" follows closely the well-known novel of Scott dealing with the tragic fate of two lovers separated by family strife.

ACT I

Scene 1. Ashton's Castle of Lammermoor. Lucy Ashton is being urged by her brother to accept Bucklaw, who will restore their family fortunes, but she persists in refusing him. Ashton learns that she is in love with Edgar of Ravenswood, his worst enemy, and in a rage sends his men to capture this presumptuous aspirant to her hand.

Scene 2. Grove near the Castle. Edgar and Lucy meet in secret for a farewell interview. He is sailing for France, and she promises eternal fidelity to him. They exchange tokens and part.

ACT II

Scene 1. Lucy's Apartments. Ashton makes preparations for the marriage of his sister with Bucklaw, never doubting that

he will obtain her consent at the final moment. The girl is in deep dejection. Letters between her and Edgar have been intercepted and she is told that he is faithless. A forged letter from Edgar is shown in proof of this. Finally she yields to her brother's entreaties and the arguments of Raymond, her spiritual adviser, and agrees to sign the wedding contract.

Scene 2. Hall of the Castle. The guests have assembled for the wedding ceremony. Bucklaw is being congratulated by his friends, and Lucy enters as a passive figure in the scene. At this moment Edgar rushes wildly into the hall and demands that the ceremony should cease. Ashton triumphantly shows him the contract signed by his sister. Edgar loads her with reproaches and leaves the room before Ashton's retainers can interpose.

ACT III

Scene 1. Hall of the Castle. The wedding has been celebrated despite Edgar's interposition, and he has made an appointment to fight a duel with Ashton. The bride and groom have been shown their apartments, and while the guests still make merry the news is circulated that Lucy has gone mad and stabbed Bucklaw. She appears among the horrified guests raving mad.

Scene 2. (Sometimes omitted.) A Churchyard. Edgar awaits his enemy and dreams of his lost love. A bell tolls and he hears that Lucy is dead, and to the last was faithful as she had promised. Edgar stabs himself.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Dramatic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Italian text by Illica and Giacosa, after the American drama by David Belasco and John Luther Long. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, February 17, 1904.

SCENE : Nagasaki, Japan.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

MADAME BUTTERFLY (Cho-Cho-San), *a Japanese woman* [Soprano].
SUZUKI, *her servant* [Mezzo-Soprano].
PINKERTON, *a lieutenant, U.S. Navy* [Tenor].
KATE PINKERTON, *his wife* [Mezzo-Soprano].
SHARPLESS, *U.S. Consul* [Tenor].
GORO, *a Japanese marriage-broker* [Tenor].
YAMADORI, *a Japanese nobleman* [Baritone].
THE BONZE, *uncle to Cho-Cho-San* [Basso].

Relatives of Cho-Cho-San, Villagers, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Madame Butterfly " is a tragedy of broken faith. The scene is laid in Japan, but the characters and flavour of the work are both Japanese and American.[1]

ACT I

A Japanese Villa. Lieutenant Pinkerton, U.S. Navy, finding that he will be stationed in Nagasaki for some months, desires to contract a Japanese marriage. He is assured by the marriage-broker who transacts the business for him that this marriage will only be binding so long as he consents to live with his wife, and that afterwards she can marry again. But Cho-Cho-San, the girl who agrees to marry the lieutenant, has fallen deeply in love with him and believes she is entering into a life contract. She goes so far as to renounce her religion, thus severing all

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

connexion with her own people. Sharpless, the American Consul, tries to prevent the match by telling his friend Pinkerton how seriously the girl considers it. The lieutenant has further proof of this when a fanatical bonze, or priest, an uncle of hers, appears, as the wedding party is seated at the feast, and heaps curses upon her head for renouncing her faith. All her relatives thereupon desert her, but Cho-Cho-San, though sorrowful, clings to her husband and he soon calms her fears. The scene closes in mutual protestations of love.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Villa. Three years later. After a short but blissful wedded life, Lieutenant Pinkerton has been recalled to America. He leaves Cho-Cho-San (who is now called " Madame Butterfly ") in Japan, promising to return " when the robins nest again." She trusts him implicitly, but her maid Suzuki is far from having the same confidence. After some months of silence, the battleship on which Pinkerton serves is again ordered to Japan, and the officer writes Sharpless a letter saying that he will return with an American wife, and asking the Consul to break the news to Madame Butterfly. The Consul brings her the letter, but she is so overjoyed at seeing a missive from him that she pays no heed to its message, and the Consul has not the heart to disturb her faith. She also turns a deaf ear to Goro, the marriage-broker, who comes to arrange a match between her and a Japanese nobleman. When he says that Pinkerton's desertion is equivalent to a divorce, she answers proudly, " That may be so in Japan, but I am an American ! " When the Consul tries again to convince her of the truth she produces a fair-haired child and says, " My lieutenant cannot forget this." The Consul departs shaking his head, just as the sound of cannon announces the warship's arrival. In a fever of excitement Butterfly and her maid decorate the house with flowers to honour the expected arrival of its lord. The evening drags by and the maid and child fall asleep, but the lady of the house waits and watches without closing her eyes.

Scene 2. The Same. The Next Day. Madame Butterfly has watched and listened all night long, and now morning has arrived without bringing her husband. Suzuki awakes and persuades her wearied mistress to lie down and rest. She does

so, in order that she may look well when "he comes." After she has retired the Consul arrives with Pinkerton and his American wife. When Pinkerton hears from Suzuki of Butterfly's devotion and trust he is overcome with remorse and cannot remain to face the deserted bride. Suzuki is commissioned to tell her that Mrs Pinkerton will care for the child, but Butterfly, entering at this moment, hears it from the American lady's own lips. She retains her composure by a great effort, congratulates Mrs Pinkerton politely, and says that if they will return in half an hour they may have the child. When the Americans return at the specified time they find that Madame Butterfly has slain herself with her father's sword, on which is inscribed, "Die with honour when you can no longer live with honour."

THE MAGIC FLUTE

[*Il Flauto Magico. Die Zauberflöte.*] *Fantastic Opera in Two or Four Acts. Music by Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Book by Schickaneder. First produced at Vienna, September* 30, 1791.

SCENE : Egypt.

TIME : Legendary Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

SARASTRO, *Priest of Isis* [Basso].
THE QUEEN OF NIGHT, *a sorceress* [Soprano].
PAMINA, *her daughter* [Soprano].
TAMINO, *a prince* [Tenor].
PAPAGENO, *his attendant* [Basso].
PAPAGENA, *the latter's sweetheart* [Soprano].
MONASTATOS, *a Moor* [Tenor].

Priests, Ladies, Pages, Fairies, and Wild Creatures.

ARGUMENT

" The Magic Flute " is an allegorical fantasy showing the reward of constancy. It relates the adventures of a prince and an imprisoned maiden. The bewildering array of scenes is wedded to sensuous music, and the whole action is heightened by strange scenic effects. The two acts into which the opera was originally divided have become three or four acts in modern presentations.

ACT I

A Forest. Prince Tamino has lost his way in a dense forest and is moreover pursued by a gigantic serpent. His cries bring three fairies to his aid, who slay the serpent with their spears. Tamino now sees a strange being who walks like a man but is clad in birds' feathers. It is the fantastic Papageno, who claims that this is the proper way to catch birds. Papageno is a great braggart and at once claims the honour of having slain the serpent. The fairies fasten a padlock on his lips in punishment

for the lie. They show the Prince the portrait of a very lovely maiden, Pamina, who is in the power of Sarastro, at the Temple of Isis. Her mother, the Queen of the Night, now appears and invokes his aid to rescue the maiden. The Prince gladly consents to enter upon the adventure, and is given a magic flute which will ward off danger. Papageno is to accompany him; the padlock is removed and he is given a chime of bells.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Palace of Sarastro. The Moor Monastatos has persecuted Pamina with his attentions. Angered by her disdain he drags her into an apartment, but is frightened away by Papageno, who has been transported thither by her mother to announce the coming of the Prince. Pamina plans to flee with them.

Scene 2. Entrance to the Temple. Tamino approaches the Temple of Isis conducted by three pages. At two of its doors he is denied admittance, but at the third a priest appears and tells him he is mistaken in his opinion of Sarastro. The maiden is really being protected in the Temple to keep her out of the power of her mother's sorceries. Pamina and Papageno now appear, but the Moor prevents their escape. Sarastro enters and, having heard all the story, orders that the Moor shall be punished. The two lovers he greets kindly, telling the Prince he must show himself worthy by passing through an ordeal of the Temple.

ACT III

Scene 1. A Palm Grove. The priests meet to consider the case of the two lovers, and agree that they shall be united if the Prince can successfully undergo the ordeals. This will also prevent Pamina from falling under the evil influence of her mother.

Scene 2. A Courtyard. The first ordeal is that of silence. Tamino and Papageno must not utter a word. The three attendants of the Queen of the Night now appear and tempt them, but they remain firm, though at great cost to Papageno.

Scene 3. A Garden. While Pamina is asleep the Moor approaches her, then conceals himself when her mother appears

with a dagger which the girl is commanded to employ against Sarastro. When the Queen is gone the Moor returns and threatens Pamina, but is again foiled by Sarastro.

Scene 4. A Corridor in the Temple. Papageno and his master still continue under the ordeal of silence, which finally becomes too great a strain for the former. The Prince remains silent even when Pamina meets him and addresses endearing remarks. She is deeply wounded that he does not reply.

ACT IV

Scene 1. The Pyramids. The Prince is commanded to wander out into the desert. He parts sadly from Pamina. Seeing the delights as well as the sorrows of love Papageno wishes for a "little wife" of his own. An old hag appears before him. As he is about to run away she changes into the young and pretty Papagena. But he, too, must first prove his worth.

Scene 2. The Desert. Pamina believes the Prince to be faithless and is about to kill herself with the dagger, when she is prevented by the three pages. Papageno likewise is in the depths of despair over the loss of Papagena, but when he finds he can summon her by ringing his chime of bells his sorrow is turned into joy.

Scene 3. A Fiery Cavern. Tamino is seen undergoing the last of his ordeals. He is menaced by great waterfalls and tongues of flame. Beyond these he beholds Pamina and calls to her, his lips now being unsealed. The lovers are reunited, and a few strains from the magic flute cause the remaining dangers to vanish.

Scene 4. The Temple of Isis. Sarastro welcomes the Prince and the maiden and joins their hands. Papageno and his Papagena are likewise made happy. The Queen and her agent the Moor are vanquished.

MANON

Dramatic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Jules Massenet. Book by H. Meilhac and P. Gille, after the Abbé Prévost's "Manon Lescaut." First produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, January 19, 1884.

SCENE: Amiens, Paris, Havre.

TIME: 1721.

CHARACTERS

COMTE DES GRIEUX, *a French nobleman* [Basso].
CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX, *his son* [Tenor].
LESCAUT, *a guardsman* [Baritone].
MANON LESCAUT, *his cousin* [Soprano].
GUILLOT MORFONTAIN, *a minister of finance* [Basso].
DE BRÉTIGNY, *a nobleman* [Baritone].
POUSSETTE, *an actress* [Soprano].
ROSETTE, *an actress* [Soprano].
JAVOTTE, *an actress* [Contralto].

Innkeeper, Citizens, Actresses, Soldiers, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Manon" is a picture of French life among the gay set, drawn from Prévost's well-known story "Manon Lescaut," used by Puccini many years later as the basis of his opera of that name.[1]

ACT I

A Tavern at Amiens. Manon Lescaut is a gay and volatile young Frenchwoman whose spirits her parents very wisely seek to curb by placing her in a convent. On the way thither, escorted by her cousin, she stops at an inn where Morfontain is entertaining some friends. The old roué immediately begins to make advances to her but is repulsed. Not so young Des Grieux, who has been destined for the priesthood. He finds

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Heugel, Paris, and to Miss Glossop Harris for permission to use their text of the opera.

Manon so attractive, and she him, that they both forsake their prospective vows and run away to Paris.

ACT II

Des Grieux's Apartments in Paris. Manon and the chevalier live quietly in Paris and he writes to his father the Comte, asking permission to marry her. Her cousin, Lescaut, arrives to demand that he should treat her honourably, but with Lescaut comes De Brétigny, a wealthy Parisian, who makes advances to her while her lover is away. He tells her he will lavish his riches upon her, and that Des Grieux will be seized for debt that night. Manon yields to the temptation and does not warn her lover, who is arrested. She goes with De Brétigny.

ACT III

Scene 1. A Parisian Boulevard. Manon is the centre of a laughing crowd of actresses and boulevardiers. True to his word, De Brétigny maintains her in luxury. But she overhears the Comte les Grieux telling a friend that his son, the chevalier, disgusted with Manon's conduct, is about to become a monk. She tries to obtain further information, but the Comte, guessing her identity, will not say more. She resolves to seek her former lover.

Scene 2. The Seminary of St Sulpice. The Comte is reluctant that his son should enter the priesthood and endeavours to dissuade him. Afterwards, Manon enters, but the chevalier only reproaches her with her faithlessness.

She says that she still loves him, and after much argument persuades him to come back to the world with her.

ACT IV

A Gambling House in Paris. In order to maintain Manon in the style to which she is accustomed, the chevalier frequents the gambling houses. He wins large sums, especially from Morfontain. The latter accuses him of cheating, and, by way of revenge upon Manon, who jilted him, has both Des Grieux and Manon arrested. The Comte also joins forces against her and plots to have her deported where she can do no further mischief.

ACT V

The Open Road near Havre. Manon is being escorted out of the country by a guard of soldiers. The chevalier asks Lescaut, her cousin, to aid him in rescuing her. They try bribery. She has a short interview with Des Grieux, begging his pardon for wrecking his life ; then dies of excitement and fatigue.

MANON LESCAUT

Tragic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Book founded on the Abbé Prévost's famous novel. First produced at Turin, February 1, 1893.

SCENE : Amiens, Paris, Havre, Louisiana.

TIME : Second Half of the Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

LESCAUT, *a sergeant in the Royal Guard* [Baritone].
THE CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX [Tenor].
GERONTE DE RAVIN, *Treasurer-General* [Basso].
EDMUND, *a student* [Tenor].
MANON LESCAUT [Soprano].

Guards, Students, Women of the Town, etc.

ARGUMENT

Like Massenet's opera of almost the same name, this is founded upon the Abbé Prévost's celebrated romance. The fair and frail Manon seems to have had a peculiar charm for musical composers, as well as for artists and engravers, and both the operas woven round her story are rich in emotional colour.[1]

ACT I

An Inn at Amiens. Sergeant Lescaut has brought his pretty, frivolous young sister Manon to Amiens, in order to place her in a convent there. At the inn, he is persuaded to join in a game of chance with some fellow-travellers. While he is thus employed, Geronte, another guest, sees Manon, makes love to her, and arranges to rescue her from the boredom of convent life by carrying her off in his carriage the same evening. Then appears a second admirer, Des Grieux, whom, as he is younger and handsomer than Geronte, Manon likes better. They go off together in Geronte's carriage. To the furious ravings of

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the deceived Geronte, Sergeant Lescaut replies cynically, "She will tire of him when he has no more money—and then there will be another chance for *you*."

ACT II

Geronte's House in Paris. The Sergeant's words have come true. Manon has deserted a young and penniless lover for an old and wealthy one. But she is not happy. When Des Grieux pays her a secret visit, and reproaches her for her fickleness, she soon persuades him that she loves him still. Geronte comes in and finds them entirely reconciled. With bitter gibes, he leaves them. Then Lescaut arrives, breathless. They had better clear out. Geronte has gone to summon the gendarmes. Manon pauses to secure her jewels, and the delay is fatal. The gendarmes burst in and arrest her. Geronte has denounced her to the police as a courtesan, and she is to be deported to America, with a gang of other members of the sisterhood. Des Grieux declares he will follow her to the utmost ends of the earth.

ACT III

A Square near the Quayside, Havre. Manon is in prison, awaiting deportation. Her brother and Des Grieux make an attempt to rescue her, but fail. She is brought forth, with the other five lights o' love, and taken in an open waggon to the quay, the loyal Des Grieux walking all the way beside her. The captain of the ship is touched by this devotion, and agrees to take Des Grieux as a member of the crew.

ACT IV

A vast Wilderness near the Frontiers of New Orleans. Dusk is falling. There is no human habitation in sight. Des Grieux enters, supporting the half-conscious Manon. Both are ragged and footsore. Des Grieux finds a resting-place for Manon, and leaves her to go and look for water. She thinks he has left her for ever, and gives way to utter despair. He returns only just in time to hold her in his arms while she dies, and to hear her declaring with her last breath that she loves him. Then he falls senseless beside her.

MARITANA

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by William Vincent Wallace. Words by Fitzball, with interpolated lyrics by Alfred Bunn. First produced at Drury Lane, November 15, 1845.

SCENE : Madrid.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

DON CÉSAR DE BAZAN, *a good-natured rake* [Tenor].
DON JOSÉ DE SANTAREM, *his friend* [Baritone].
THE MARQUIS DE MONTEFIORI [Basso].
THE KING OF SPAIN [Basso].
THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD [Basso].
THE ALCALDE [Basso].
LAZARILLO, *a poor boy* [Mezzo-Soprano].
MARITANA, *a gipsy singer* [Soprano].
THE MARQUISE DE MONTEFIORI [Mezzo-Soprano].

Chorus of Soldiers, Gipsies, Madrilenos, etc.

ARGUMENT

This was Wallace's first opera, and it won an instantaneous success. Many of the separate numbers, such as "Scenes that are Brightest" and "Let me like a Soldier Fall," were heard in every Victorian drawing-room, and have not exhausted their popular appeal even now. The plot, borrowed from the French play, "Don César de Bazan," by Dumarion and d'Ennery, is genuinely dramatic, and the character of Don César de Bazan, created originally by Victor Hugo in "Ruy Blas," has an agreeable dash of rakishness about it.[1]

ACT I

A Square in Madrid. Maritana, the gipsy singer, is delighting the crowd with her songs. The King sees her, and is greatly charmed. Don José determines perfidiously to encourage the

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Boosey and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

royal caprice, intending to betray the King to the Queen, with whom he, Don José, is madly in love. The Captain of the Guard is about to arrest a friendless lad, Lazarillo, when the light-hearted, impetuous, spendthrift young nobleman, Don César de Bazan, comes on the scene and takes the boy's part. After an altercation, he challenges the Captain of the Guard to a duel. Under a recent royal edict the penalty for this action is death by hanging. Don César is arrested. In vain Maritana offers to ransom him with gold on the morrow. His crime was flagrant, and the edict must be enforced.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Interior of a Fortress. Don César awaits the hour of execution. The faithful Lazarillo is with him. To him enters the perfidious Don José, who has intercepted a royal pardon granted a few hours before. Don César is not afraid of death, but he would fain have died like a soldier. Don José says that he can obtain permission for him to be shot instead of hanged if he will first go through a form of marriage " with a veiled lady." Don César agrees, and the lady is introduced. She is Maritana. While the hasty ceremony is in progress, Lazarillo stealthily removes the cartridges from the arquebuses of the firing party; when it is concluded, Don José hurries Maritana away.

Scene 2. A Room in the Palace of the Marquis de Montefiori. Don José has arranged that the King shall meet Maritana there, and that he shall be presented to her as her bridegroom, Don César de Bazan. But this plot is frustrated by the sudden appearance of Don César himself, who, thanks to Lazarillo, is none the worse for being ' shot,' has escaped in the dress of a monk, and is seeking his bride. Don José persuades the Marchioness to impersonate the veiled lady, but Don César sees through the ruse, and in order to prevent him from tracking down Maritana Don José has him rearrested.

ACT III

A Room in the Villa d'Aranjuez. Don José has brought Maritana to the villa, where the King meets her, and makes love to her with stubborn ardour. Once more Don César unexpectedly

appears. He recognizes the King, so, when his Majesty claims to be Don César de Bazan, Don César declares that *he* is the King. He now learns of the royal pardon intercepted by Don José. Lazarillo arrives, bearing a letter which bids the King join the Queen at the palace without delay. When the King has gone, Maritana tells Don César that she has caught sight of the Queen in the garden of a neighbouring villa, and urges her husband to go in quest of her Majesty, and plead their cause with her. Obediently Don César hurries off—by way of the window. He and the King return almost simultaneously, both much excited. Don César proceeds to bolt the door, and then to fling his sword at the feet of his startled sovereign. There follows an account of what has passed during his absence. In the adjacent garden he found a lady and a gentleman walking. He overheard the gentleman telling the lady that in the Villa d'Aranjuez she would find her husband with his mistress—and the lady was the Queen! The loyal and virtuously indignant Don César at once stretched the traitor dead upon the ground. Much affected by this intelligence the King picks up Don César's sword and hands it back to him, with the information that he appoints him Governor of Valencia. Don César points out that the Governorship of Granada is also vacant. The King agrees to let him have that post instead—it is more acceptable, as Granada is farther from Madrid—and Don César's creditors!

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

[*Le Nozze di Figaro.*] *Comic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Book by Lorenzo Da Ponte, founded upon the comedy of Beaumarchais. First produced at the National Theatre, Vienna, May* 1, 1786.

SCENE : Seville.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

COUNT ALMAVIVA, *a nobleman of Seville* [Baritone].
COUNTESS ROSINA, *his wife* [Soprano].
FIGARO, *valet to the Count* [Basso].
SUSANNA, *his betrothed* [Soprano].
DOCTOR BARTOLO, *a physician* [Basso].
BASILIO, *a music-master* [Tenor].
CHERUBINO, *a page* [Soprano].
MARCELLINA, *the housekeeper* [Contralto].
ANTONIO, *a gardener* [Basso].
BARBARINA, *his daughter* [Soprano].
DON GUZMAN, *a judge* [Tenor].

Members of the Count's household, Friends, Citizens, etc.

ARGUMENT

"The Marriage of Figaro" is a direct continuation of "The Barber of Seville," both being founded upon the uproarious comedy by Beaumarchais.

In the present opera, Count Almaviva is wedded to Rosina, whom he courted under such difficulties with the aid of the "Barber." But having obtained the lady, he proves fickle and susceptible to other beauties who may chance to come his way. His latest flame is Barbarina, the pretty daughter of his gardener, but he has a rival in the persistent page, Cherubino, of whom he seeks to get rid by placing him in the army. Figaro, the barber, has entered the Count's service and is looking forward to marriage with Susanna, a ward of the Countess. Susanna also has been pursued by the Count, unsuccessfully.

ACT I

A Room in the Count's Castle. Preparations are toward for the marriage of Figaro and Susanna. He is discovered busily arranging the furniture, while she is trying on a bridal wreath before the mirror. They make plans for the future, and she says she will be glad thus to escape the Count's attentions. Dr Bartolo, the physician, arrives and is told by Marcellina, the old housekeeper, that Figaro was formerly engaged to marry her. The doctor agrees to help her to win justice, and is glad to have this chance to get even with Figaro. (See " The Barber.") Marcellina and Susanna engage in a war of words over the bridegroom. The page, Cherubino, now arrives with his troubles ; he is to be sent away immediately because he loves Barbarina. His recital of woe is interrupted by the entrance of the Count himself. The page jumps behind a chair. Susanna seats herself before him. The Count makes advances, but is disturbed by the entrance of Basilio, and in turn goes behind the chair. The page slips like an eel into the chair and is covered by a dress which Susanna throws over it. After some further confusion, both the Count and Cherubino are discovered and the page is ordered to depart forthwith.

ACT II

In the apartments of the Countess. Cherubino still lingers round the house, and the Countess decides to use him as a tool to unmask her husband's perfidy. She and Susanna plan to dress him in woman's attire, and he is nothing loath as this will enable him to remain for the wedding and be near Barbarina. While they are thus busied the Count comes to the door and demands admittance. Cherubino jumps out of the window and the Count is baffled. But when the gardener comes in to complain that his flower-pots beneath the window are broken, the Count's suspicions are again aroused. The gardener also produces Cherubino's commission in the army, which has been dropped in the leap. But Figaro, who has entered meanwhile, shoulders all the blame, saying that he had come to see Susanna and also had the letter. Marcellina, the housekeeper, now appears to enforce her claim against Figaro, and the Count, glad of the excuse, postpones the marriage until this claim can be investigated.

ACT III

A room in the Castle. Susanna is persuaded by the Countess to meet the Count, in the hope of untangling the marital difficulty. The Count is obdurate, until it is found that Figaro is actually the son of Marcellina and so could not possibly marry her. This apparently removes the last obstacle to his happiness. But the Countess and Susanna had agreed to change clothes for the evening in order to confuse the Count still further. The ruse is so successful that Figaro also is fooled and becomes furiously jealous.

ACT IV

The Garden. The last act becomes a farce of confused identities. The Countess and her maid have changed clothes, fooling both the Count and his servant. Barbarina is also in the general mix-up, but it is Figaro who comes in for cuffing whenever he or his master makes a mistake—which is frequent. Finally lights are brought on, the Count realizes that he has been well punished, all are forgiven, and the marriage of Figaro is approved.

MARTHA

Romantic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Friedrich von Flotow. Book by St Georges and Friedrich. First produced at Vienna, November 25, 1847.

SCENE : Richmond, England.

TIME : Reign of Queen Anne.

CHARACTERS

LIONEL, *a farmer* [Tenor].
PLUNKETT, *his foster brother* [Basso].
LORD TRISTAN, *a courtier* [Baritone].
LADY HENRIETTA DURHAM, *a maid-of-honour* [Soprano].
NANCY, *her attendant* [Contralto].
SHERIFF OF RICHMOND [*Baritone*].

Lords, Ladies, Farmers, Servants, Citizens.

ARGUMENT

One of the most graceful of the light operas is "Martha," an old favourite dealing with love as opposed to pride.

ACT I

The Queen's Court at Hampton. Lady Henrietta, a maid-of-honour to Queen Anne, has become weary of humdrum court life and seeks a new diversion. She talks it over with her sprightly maid, Nancy, but does not fall in with any of the latter's suggestions. Lord Tristan, an old admirer, meets with as little success when he proposes entertainments for the day. At this moment a group of villagers and servants pass singing gaily on their way to a country fair. Their careless happiness appeals to Henrietta. She and Nancy will go to the fair also, dressed as servants, so that they can mingle freely with the crowd. It will be amusing. No sooner said than done. Lord Tristan, shocked, tries to restrain them, but instead is pressed into service as their escort.

ACT II

The Market at Richmond. Lionel and Plunkett, two well-to-do farmers, drive to the fair in search of household servants. The Sheriff arrives and proclaims that all contracts of this nature shall be binding upon both parties for a full year, if money is advanced. Just after this announcement is made, Tristan arrives with the two girls dressed as servants, who immediately capture the fancy of the two farmers. In spite of Tristan's efforts to draw them away, they allow the farmers to haggle with them over terms, and finally accept an advance payment for salaries. Without knowing it, they have bound themselves to service for a year. When the farmers now insist upon an immediate departure, objections are raised by the other three. But the crowd prevents Tristan from rescuing the girls, and the Sheriff declares that they must go with their new masters.

ACT III

The Farm House. Henrietta has taken the name of Martha, and Nancy that of Julia. Lionel and Plunkett try to introduce them to their duties and are amazed at their ignorance over the most ordinary things, such as spinning. Plunkett tries to make boisterous love to "Julia," but finds her sharp tongue more than a match for him. Lionel is more courteous to "Martha," and ends by falling deeply in love with her, but she only laughs at him. However, she relents so far as to sing for him a tender little ballad, "'Tis the Last Rose of Summer," hoping to touch his heart so that he will release her from the contract. After the two men have retired, the girls make their escape through a window, with the assistance of Tristan.

ACT IV

A Country Tavern. While Plunkett is drinking with some of his friends, a party of hunters from the court enter, and he recognizes among them his lost servant girl, "Julia." He demands that she shall go home with him and complete her contract, but her calls for help bring her friends about her and they chase Plunkett out into the forest. Next Lionel enters, greatly dejected over his loss of "Martha," when whom should

he see among the hunters but the girl herself as a court lady. He lays claim to her and she reproaches him for being an impertinent bumpkin. The others think him a madman, and she is glad to have this construction put upon the episode. Plunkett comes to his friend's assistance and leads him away, overcome with despair. Henrietta's heart is touched when she realizes the sincerity and depth of his passion.

ACT V

Scene 1. The Farm House. Lionel's long-standing claim to the earldom of Derby is decided in his favour, but he takes no interest in the matter. He is almost insane from grief. Henrietta is persuaded to visit him, but he does not recognize the "Martha" of his dreams. Nancy and Plunkett come to an understanding and arrange a little scene to restore Lionel's reason.

Scene 2. The Fair at Richmond. Another fair is being held, and Plunkett brings his friend to the square where they had first met the girls. Lo! there they are again, dressed in their servants' attire. Memory and reason return to Lionel, and when "Martha" sings again to him the ballad of the rose his cup of happiness is full. She is willing to become his wife.

MEFISTOFELE

Dramatic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Anigo Boïto. Words by Composer, closely following Goethe's "Faust." First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1868.

SCENE : Germany and Greece.

TIME : The Middle Ages.

CHARACTERS

MEFISTOFELE [Baritone].
FAUST, *a scholar* [Tenor].
WAGNER, *his friend* [Basso].
NEREUS [Baritone].
PANTALIS [Tenor].
MARGUERITE [Soprano].
MARTHA, *her mother* [Contralto].
HELEN OF TROY [Soprano].

Students, Citizens, Phantoms, Witches, Bacchantes, Greeks, etc.

ARGUMENT

This ambitious opera is based, like Gounod's "Faust," upon Goethe's great drama, but Boïto gives us more of the original story than Gounod does. The rôle of Mefistofele is an exacting one, and a favourite with singers of exceptional calibre.[1]

PROLOGUE

The Court of Heaven. Angels adore the Most High with genuflexions and chanting. Mefistofele appears, and wagers that he can win the soul of the scholar-philosopher, Faust. He is challenged to make the attempt.

ACT I

Frankfort on Main. Easter Sunday. The streets are full of cheerful people. Faust and his friend Wagner stand aloof,

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looking on. They are followed, when they turn away, by a mysterious grey friar. To escape his pursuit, Faust goes into his own house, but the friar slips in after him, and reveals his identity. It is Mefistofele. He offers Faust all the treasures of this world if he will be his servant in the next. Faust agrees, and Mefistofele bears him away on his cloak.

ACT II

Scene 1. A Garden. Mefistofele introduces Faust to the beautiful Marguerite. While the philosopher makes love to her, the Fiend dallies with Martha, her mother. At parting, Faust gives Marguerite a powerful narcotic, telling her to administer it to her mother.

Scene 2. The Brocken. The Witches' Sabbath at its height. Mefistofele brings Faust to behold the weird orgies. Visions are called up. Faust asks to see Marguerite, and beholds her in a prison-cell, accused of poisoning her mother and killing her newborn child—and his.

ACT III

The Interior of Marguerite's Cell. She is alone, distraught with sorrow and remorse, condemned to death, and without hope of pardon on earth or in heaven. Mefistofele and Faust appear, and Faust urges her to make her escape with him, but she refuses to do so as long as he remains in league with the Prince of Darkness. Day dawns, and at daylight her visitants leave her. She falls dead, while angels sing that her sins are forgiven and her soul is saved.

ACT IV

In Ancient Greece. As a further demonstration of his superhuman powers, Mefistofele transports Faust to Homeric Greece, and presents him to Helen of Troy. She tells Faust the story of her life, of the golden Apple of Discord, and the siege and fall of Troy. Faust proceeds to woo her, and she smiles upon him. In Goethe's play this marriage between Faust and Helen is said to symbolize the union of romanticism and classicism.

EPILOGUE

In Faust's Study. Faust, now an old man, looks back remorsefully on his past life. Mefistofele appears, and tries again to tempt him. Sirens surround him, and sing their alluring songs in vain. But Faust has learnt that the joys of the senses are fleeting joys. He turns away, and opens his Bible. He reads there of pardon and redemption; he kneels to pray that these may be vouchsafed to him. The Fiend, discomfited, sinks out of view. And, as Faust dies, a shower of roses falls upon him, in token that his prayer has been heard.

DIE MEISTERSINGER

[*The Master-singers.*] *Comic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Munich, June* 21, 1868.

SCENE : Nuremberg.

TIME : The Sixteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

HANS SACHS, *a cobbler* [Baritone].
VEIT POGNER, *a goldsmith* [Basso].
EVA, *his daughter* [Soprano].
BECKMESSER, *the town clerk* [Baritone].
KOTHNER, *a baker* [Basso].
WALTER VON STOLZING, *a Knight* [Tenor].
DAVID, *apprentice to Sachs* [Tenor].
MAGDALENA, *maid to Eva* [Contralto].
WATCHMAN [Baritone].

Master-singers, Villagers, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Die Meistersinger " is the only comic opera that Wagner wrote. It deals with an historic time in Nuremberg when all the tradespeople wrote verses and indulged in singing contests, and may be regarded as Wagner's protest against artificiality.[1]

ACT I

Interior of St Catherine's Church. The whole town of Nuremberg is music-mad. The master-singers, or head men in this noble profession, hold public contests governed by rigid rules, and the victors are richly rewarded. Veit Pogner, the goldsmith, finally announces that at the next contest he will bestow his daughter's hand upon the successful man. Beckmesser, the town clerk, is overjoyed at this, as he has long paid court to the fair Eva, and thinks he can easily win the contest. But

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Schott and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

Eva has had no eyes for the clerk. She has noted the respectful attention of a young nobleman, Walter von Stolzing, who has met her at the Church and elsewhere. Hearing of the contest, Walter resolves to enter it, and is instructed in the rules by David, the apprentice of Hans Sachs. But when Walter first appears before the master-singers, Beckmesser keeps the score and marks down so many mistakes that the young man is ruled out. Hans Sachs, the cobbler, is the only one who speaks in his favour.

ACT II

A Street in Nuremberg. On one side is Sachs' cobbler's shop, on the other Pogner's house. Eva finds an opportunity to meet Walter and console him for his lack of success. She says that she will not abide by her father's wishes, if some one else wins, but will elope with him. They hasten to conceal themselves as Beckmesser comes out to sing a serenade under Eva's window. But the serenader is interrupted by the hammering and singing of Sachs in his shop. Then David appears and, mistaking the attentions of Beckmesser as being directed to his own lady-love, he pounds the clerk over the head. Their cries draw the whole village upon the scene and a small-sized riot is in progress, which ends as suddenly as it began, when the watchman's voice is heard down the street.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Cobbler's Shop. While Sachs and his apprentice are at work, Walter comes in greatly elated. He says that he has dreamed a song so beautiful that, if he can set it down, it will win the prize. Sachs encourages him and they finally commit it to a manuscript. Beckmesser learns of this famous song and steals the manuscript, planning to sing it as his own. Eva comes in to try on some new shoes, and they all make plans for the coming contest.

Scene 2. An Open Field. The morning of the song-festival has arrived and the different trade guilds bring forward their noted singers. Sachs alone champions Walter, who is not concerned over the loss of his manuscript. His song is superior to the master-singer's rules anyway. Beckmesser tries to sing

the stolen song, but his memory proves treacherous and he makes a laughable jumble of it. Walter is grudgingly allowed to follow and speedily wins all his hearers by his song. He is accorded the prize, and Pogner bestows upon him the hand of the happy Eva.

NORMA

Dramatic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Vincenzo Bellini. Book by Romani. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, December 26, 1831.

SCENE : Gaul.

TIME : *Circa* 30 B.C.

CHARACTERS

OROVIST, *chief of the Druids* [Basso].
NORMA, *his daughter, the High Priestess* [Soprano].
ADALGISA, *a priestess* [Contralto].
POLLIONE, *Roman proconsul* [Tenor].
FLAVIUS, *his friend* [Tenor].
CLOTILDA, *friend of Norma* [Soprano].

Two Children, Priests, Soldiers, Druids.

ARGUMENT

" Norma " is an opera of tragic intensity written round the theme of a woman's scorn. A Druidic priestess, forsaken by her Roman lover, brings down vengeance upon his head, but is yet willing to share his fate.

ACT I

Grove of the Druids. Norma, the High Priestess of the Druids, is charged with the duties of the Temple, and she alone can declare war or peace. By cutting the sacred mistletoe she can give the signal for war, and this she is urged to do in order that the Roman invaders may be expelled ; but she stays her hand. Despite her vows to the Temple, she has secretly wedded Pollione, the Roman proconsul, and has had two children by him. But the Roman is faithless and is even now planning to abduct Adalgisa, another virgin of the Temple. The latter, however, resists his pleas and finally confesses her temptation to the priestess. Norma is disposed to pardon her, remembering her own weakness, until she learns that the proconsul is the

man involved; then she turns upon Pollione, who enters, and loads him with reproaches.

ACT II

Scene 1. Norma's Apartments. While the two children of Norma's secret union with the Roman lie asleep upon a couch, the Priestess enters, resolved to kill them. But maternal love proves stronger than anger, and she asks Adalgisa, who now enters, to take charge of the children and conduct them to the proconsul. They may thus escape to Rome while she herself remains to expiate her sin upon the funeral pyre.

Scene 2. The Temple Interior. While Adalgisa is ministering at the altar, the Roman impiously attempts to seize her by force. Norma enters and strikes upon the sacred shield, summoning all her warriors. She declares that the time has come to make war and drive out the invaders. They seize the proconsul and bring him before her for judgment. Norma condemns him and then tears off the wreath from her brow, saying that she also has been guilty. The proconsul recognizes too late the worth of the woman he has deserted. The Druids make ready the funeral pyre, and Norma ascends it with her lover, both perishing in the flames.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

[*Orfeo.*] *Legendary Opera in Four Acts. Music by Christopher W. Gluck. Book by Raniero di Calzabigi. First produced at Vienna, October* 5, 1762.

SCENE : Greece and the Lower World.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

ORPHEUS, *a sweet singer* [Contralto].
EURYDICE, *his bride* [Soprano].
AMOR, *god of love* [Soprano].

Furies, Shades, Friends of Orpheus, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Orpheus and Eurydice" is based upon the ancient Greek legend of the musician who went into the depths of Hades to rescue his dead wife.

ACT I

The Tomb of Eurydice. Eurydice, the bride of Orpheus, who charms all things by his music, has perished from the bite of a serpent. Orpheus and his friends gather round her tomb to lament her loss, and he prays to the gods to restore her to him. He is ready to make any sacrifice, even to descend into Hades itself, in order to rescue her. Touched by his grief, the god Amor is sent to tell him he may make the journey, trusting only to his powers of song ; but that he must on no account turn to look upon the face of his wife, or Death will again seize upon her.

ACT II

Hades, the Abode of the Departed. The shades and furies swarm around the entrance to Hades, reviling Orpheus for having attempted to enter ; but he sings so sweetly of his grief and present quest that they stand aside and allow him to enter.

ACT III

Valley of the Blest. In the midst of Hades is the Valley of the Blest, where dwell the pure in heart. Here Orpheus on his journey finally finds his wife. The others cannot understand why he wishes to return, but touched by his song lead her to him. He does not turn to look at her, but with averted face takes her hand and leads her from the valley.

ACT IV

A Forest before a Cave. After a long upward journey, Orpheus leads his wife through a cave, finally emerging into a dense forest. Still he does not look at her, but calling back urges her to follow him quickly. She complains that he is indifferent to her; that he has not given her so much as a single glance. Without his love she would prefer death. She continues this plaint until he can resist no longer and turns to reassure her. Immediately she sinks to the ground lifeless. Orpheus bitterly reproaches himself, and while lamenting, the god Amor again appears to him and tells him that since he has suffered and toiled greatly he will be forgiven. With a touch he restores Eurydice to life and to her husband's arms.

OTELLO

Tragic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book by Arrigo Boïto, after the play by Shakespeare. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, February 5, 1887.

SCENE : Cyprus.

TIME : The Fifteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

OTELLO, *a Moorish general in the service of Venice* [Tenor].
DESDEMONA, *his wife* [Soprano].
IAGO, *lieutenant to Otello* [Baritone].
EMILIA, *his wife* [Contralto].
CASSIO, *lieutenant to Otello* [Tenor].
RODERIGO, *a Venetian gentleman* [Tenor].
LODOVICO, *a Venetian gentleman* [Basso].
MONTANO, *former governor of Cyprus* [Basso].

Soldiers, Sailors, Citizens, Servants.

ARGUMENT

The story of "Otello" closely follows Shakespeare's play, except that it omits the first act of the play dealing with Desdemona's courtship and marriage.[1]

ACT I

Open Square at Cyprus. Otello, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian State, has won the heart of Desdemona, a high-born Venetian lady, and has brought her with him on his expedition to Cyprus. The people welcome their arrival. Otello appoints Cassio as his first lieutenant in command, which act enrages Iago against them both. Iago is the servant and confidant of the general, and had hoped to win this place for himself. His scheming mind now sets on foot far-reaching plans of revenge. He succeeds in his first purpose of getting

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Cassio drunk and embroiled in a quarrel with Montano, the retiring governor. Otello enters at this moment—as Iago hoped he would—and punishes Cassio by depriving him of the command.

ACT II

A Room in the Palace. Iago next endeavours to poison the mind of Otello against his lovely and virtuous wife. At first Iago carefully drops hints and innuendoes, some of which remain. He now makes use of Cassio as a pawn in this game, pretending friendship for him, and urging him to ask Desdemona to sue for his pardon and reinstatement. Cassio does so, and Iago makes capital of this with the Moor. Otello finally becomes so suspicious that when his wife comes to plead for the lieutenant, he can see in this only evidences of her guilt. He rebuffs her angrily. Her handkerchief has fallen, and Emilia, Iago's wife, picks it up ; but Iago snatches it from her and keeps it to bolster up his flimsy chain of evidence. When alone with the Moor, he boldly states that Cassio has been Desdemona's lover, and declares that she has given him a handkerchief which will be found on his person. Otello vows vengeance against the pair.

ACT III

A Room in the Palace. Desdemona again intercedes for Cassio, but her very innocence leads to her undoing. Otello sees in it only further confirmation of his suspicions. Cassio is now led in by Iago. Otello conceals himself, and Iago gives the harmless conversation such a turn as to make it appear in line with his accusations. The handkerchief is, of course, found as Iago predicted, and arranged. Otello bursts into a torrent of rage, after Cassio leaves, and is only prevented from harming his wife by the arrival of an embassy from Venice. It brings the news that he is deposed as governor, and Cassio has been appointed in his place. When they depart, Otello commands Iago to slay Cassio, and is himself wrought up to such a fury that he falls upon the floor. Iago regards him with a sneer.

ACT IV

Desdemona's Bedchamber. Desdemona sits weeping with Emilia. All her actions have been misjudged and she is in terror for her life. She dismisses her maid, prays, and retires. Otello enters and roughly bids her prepare to die. She pleads, but he is obdurate. He suffocates her. Emilia rushes in, but too late to save her mistress's life. She alarms the palace and then reveals to Otello the whole extent of Iago's infamy, stating that he had obtained the handkerchief from her. Otello, too late, sees the truth, and overcome with remorse, stabs himself, falling by the bed of the slain Desdemona.

I PAGLIACCI

[*The Players.*] *Dramatic Opera in Two Acts. Music by Ruggiero Leoncavallo. Book by the Composer. First produced at the Teatro dal Verme, Milan, May* 21, 1892.

SCENE : Near Montalto, in Calabria.

TIME : August 15, 1865.

CHARACTERS

CANIO (Clown), *chief of a troupe of strolling players* [Tenor].
NEDDA (Columbine), *his wife* [Soprano].
TONIO (Taddeo), *a player* [Baritone].
BEPPO (Harlequin), *a player* [Tenor].
SILVIO, *a peasant* [Tenor].

Villagers.

ARGUMENT

The theme of "I Pagliacci" is simple, but strongly developed. From the words of the prologue, "We are all players," the keynote is taken. It is but another version of the Shakespearian proverb, "All the world's a stage."

Before the curtain rises on the first act Tonio, in his player's garb, appears before the footlights and sings the prologue showing that actors have hearts with the rest of mankind and are subject to the same joys and sorrows.[1]

ACT I

A Village in Calabria. The villagers congregate about the cart of a travelling showman which has just arrived, drawn by a donkey. Canio, the showman, and Nedda, his wife, get out and tell the crowd to be sure to come to the evening performance as they will see an exciting play. Canio then goes down the street and the villagers go to noonday worship, leaving Nedda alone. Tonio, another member of the troupe, seizes this opportunity to try to make love to her, and for reward

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew, Ltd.. for permission to use their text of the opera.

gets a cut across his face from her whip. He retires vowing vengeance. Silvio, a villager, between whom and herself a secret love exists, now enters and pleads with her to flee with him. She at first refuses but finally consents to see him that night. Tonio has overheard, and steals away to summon Canio. The latter returns and surprises the lovers, but does not succeed in catching Silvio. He then returns and is about to lay his hands upon his wife, when the other members of the company interpose and a semblance of peace is patched up. But Canio's heart is filled with rage.

ACT II

The Open Square, with the Showman's Stage at One Side. The show is about to begin and Tonio beats on the drum. The people bustle in, filling the seats which have been provided in the square. As Nedda collects the tickets, Silvio reminds her of her promise, but she cautions him to be silent. The play begins and deals with a jealous husband who returns to find that his wife has been entertaining another man at supper. The guest jumps out of the window, but the injured husband (played by Canio) loads his wife (Nedda) with reproaches. In his fury Canio forgets his lines and his abuse becomes real and violent. The audience is wrought up to a fever pitch, and when he seizes a knife from the table and actually stabs her, all is in an uproar. Silvio, alarmed, springs forward to her aid, and Canio, recognizing him, drives the knife into his breast also. The villagers seize him and he stands quietly gazing at his two expiring victims, saying, " The play is over ! "

PARSIFAL

Music-Drama in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer after the epic by Wolfram von Eschenbach. First produced at Bayreuth, July 26, 1882.

SCENE : Montsalvat, in the Mountains of Spain.

TIME : The Middle Ages.

CHARACTERS

AMFORTAS, *Keeper of the Grail* [Baritone].
TITUREL, *his father* [Basso].
GURNEMANZ, *Keeper of the gate* [Basso].
PARSIFAL, *the guileless one* [Tenor].
KLINGSOR, *a magician* [Baritone].
KUNDRY, *his accomplice* [Mezzo-Soprano].

Knights of the Grail, Flower Maidens, Servants, Villagers.

ARGUMENT

"Parsifal" deals with the legend of the Holy Grail, the cup which Christ used at the Last Supper and which caught the blood from His wounded side. Both the cup and the spear which wounded Him were discovered by Titurel and his Knights of the Grail, who founded a temple for their service at Montsalvat, in the mountains of Spain. In his old age, Titurel appointed his son, Amfortas, as Keeper of the Grail. Klingsor, a magician, angered at not being elected a Knight, created an enchanted castle and garden near by. He compelled Kundry, a woman who had laughed at Christ and was condemned to wander until her sin was expiated, to aid him. Kundry tempted Amfortas, who turned aside and was wounded by Klingsor with the sacred spear.[1]

ACT I

The Forest of Montsalvat. Gurnemanz, the keeper of the gate, tells of the grievous condition of Amfortas. The wound made

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Schott and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

by Klingsor refuses to heal and is doubly painful when Amfortas tries to celebrate Holy Communion. For this reason the Temple service is being neglected. Amfortas is borne in on a litter in search of healing springs, and Kundry, who has repented her share in his woe, comes in bearing a balsam which she has procured with great difficulty. But it is written that he can only find relief from the touch of the sacred spear in the hands of the Guileless One, and him they await.

After Amfortas is gone, a wounded swan falls to the ground, and while the keepers are angry over this desecration of their sacred grounds, a lad comes in triumphantly to claim his quarry. But when he is told that he is no better than a murderer, he grows penitent of his deed. Gurnemanz relents and takes him to a service in the Temple, but the utter ignorance of the lad (whose name is Parsifal) so annoys Gurnemanz that he bids the boy begone.

ACT II

The Castle and Gardens of Klingsor. Several years pass by. The magician is greatly alarmed by the tidings that a fearless young knight is coming who has put his enemies to flight on every side. It is Parsifal grown to manhood. Klingsor summons Kundry to his aid, who obeys him most unwillingly. The castle sinks from view and in place of it are seen enchanting gardens in which the Flower Maidens dwell. As Parsifal comes by the garden, they sing to him seductively; but he turns a deaf ear to them. Then Kundry appears, a dazzling vision of loveliness, and bids him stay until she tells him of his parents, whom he does not remember. He tarries, and she relates that he is the son of King Gamuret, slain in battle, and that his mother brought him up as an ignorant peasant in order to keep him from becoming a warrior. His mother—says Kundry—entrusted her with a last message and kiss. With this the enchantress leans over and presses a burning kiss on the young knight's lips; it was in this way that she had formerly betrayed Amfortas. Realizing his danger, Parsifal springs to his feet. Kundry summons the magician to her aid. Klingsor hurls the sacred spear at the knight, but he seizes it in mid-air, and strikes Klingsor dead. The gardens vanish and only

Kundry is left, an old woman, crouching upon the ground in terror.

ACT III

Scene 1. Montsalvat. Gurnemanz though grown old is still the keeper of the gate, and Amfortas is still a sufferer from his grievous malady which will not heal nor let him die. The penitent Kundry lingers about the Temple as a hewer of wood and drawer of water. A strange knight appears faint and weary from his journeys. It is Parsifal, who has completed his self-imposed mission. He kneels in prayer, the sacred spear thrust before him in the soil. Gurnemanz recognizes in him the Guileless One whom he thrust rudely out of doors as a boy, and ministers to him, while Kundry kneels and washes his feet. He baptizes her. The Temple bells sound for the noonday service, and they array Parsifal in the white robes of a Knight of the Grail.

Scene 2. The Temple Interior. The aged Titurel, father of Amfortas, wishes to see the Holy Grail unveiled once more before he dies, but the pain-racked King shrinks from the task. He begs his knights to slay him and thus remove the curse. At this moment Parsifal enters bearing the spear. He touches the wound of Amfortas and it heals immediately. Parsifal then announces that he has been sent to take charge of the Grail and he proceeds with the services. As the Grail is uncovered and held aloft, the aged Titurel expires with a smile upon his lips. The Temple is flooded with light and a dove descends and alights upon Parsifal. Kundry, who has crept in unnoticed, falls at his feet and breathes her last—redeemed.

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE

Lyric Drama in Five Acts. Music by Claude Achille Debussy. Book by Maurice Maeterlinck. First produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, April 30, 1902.

SCENE : Allemonde.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

ARKEL, *King of Allemonde* [Basso].
GENEVIEVE, *his daughter-in-law* [Soprano].
GOLAUD, *her elder son* [Baritone].
PELLEAS, *her younger son* [Tenor].
MELISANDE, *wife of Golaud* [Soprano].
YNIOLD, *son of Golaud* [Soprano].
A PHYSICIAN [Baritone].

Servants, Blind Beggars, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Pelleas and Melisande " is a mystic drama of passion and fate, both text and music being freighted with inner meaning.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. A Fountain in the Forest. Golaud, a grandson of aged King Arkel, while out hunting discovers a maiden wandering lost and weeping in the forest. She will not tell anything about herself or whence she came, but Golaud, whose wife is dead, persuades her to go with him to the King's court.

Scene 2. Genevieve, daughter-in-law of King Arkel, informs him that her son Golaud has taken the strange maiden to wife. He has written to his brother, Pelleas, to this effect and asks permission to bring her to court. If it pleases the King a light is to be shown from the tower window; otherwise he will go away. Pelleas is ordered to display the light.

Scene 3. The Castle Gardens. Genevieve shows Melisande

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Durand et Cie, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

(for that is the name given by the strange maiden) the gardens of the castle, but the girl merely shudders and says that it is all old and dark. To divert her mind, Pelleas points out the beacon lights along the shore. She sees a ship sailing away and exclaims that it is her ship. Pelleas, depressed, says that he also is going away.

ACT II

Scene 1. A Pool in the Park. Pelleas cannot tear himself away from this strange girl. He walks with her one day in the park and she seats herself by the edge of a deep pool. She takes off her wedding-ring and plays with it carelessly. It falls into the depths of the water, and Pelleas says that it cannot be recovered. The clock sounds the hour of twelve.

Scene 2. Golaud's Chamber. By a curious coincidence, Golaud has met with an accident at the precise moment when the wedding-ring fell into the pool. His horse stumbled and fell upon him. Melisande nurses him back to health. He notices that the ring is missing from her finger, and asks her where it is. She answers that she lost it in a cavern by the sea while gathering shells for little Yniold (his son). He commands her to go at once, even though it is nightfall, and search for it. Pelleas can go with her.

Scene 3. The Cavern. Pelleas and Melisande visit the cavern so that the girl will be able to describe it to Golaud. They meet three blind men wandering there, and Melisande is frightened. It portends ill-fortune.

ACT III

Scene 1. Outside Melisande's Balcony. Melisande combs her long tresses while leaning out of the window and the hair falls in a shimmering mass nearly to the ground. Pelleas stands without and fondles it, saying that it is the most beautiful hair in the world. He again says that he must go away. Golaud enters her room and finds the two in conversation. He goes to the window and tells them that they are a pair of children.

Scene 2. The Castle Vaults. By way of covert warning, Golaud takes his brother Pelleas to the vaults of the castle, showing him the deep silent pits from which no victim could escape.

Scene 3. The Gardens. They return to the gardens and Golaud bluntly cautions Pelleas to be less attentive to Melisande.
Scene 4. Outside the Window of Melisande's Chamber. It is evening, and the still watchful Golaud questions his little son, Yniold, as to the relations of Pelleas and Melisande. The child replies that they are often together, though they have kissed only once. Golaud lifts the boy up on his shoulders so that he can peer in at the lighted window. Yniold says that Pelleas is there but is not near Melisande. They only look at each other with tears in their eyes. Golaud grasps his son so tensely that the child exclaims in pain.

ACT IV

Scene 1. A Corridor. Melisande agrees to meet Pelleas for a farewell interview by the fountain. She is encountered by the aged King, who speaks kindly to her. But after he is gone, her husband enters, greeting her rudely and violently.
Scene 2. The Fountain. Pelleas and Melisande meet by the fountain and Pelleas pours forth a torrent of love. Melisande listens, half hysterical. Something moves in the shadows behind them. She is sure that it is her husband, but she clings to her lover in despair. Golaud rushes forward and transfixes Pelleas with his sword, then turns to pursue the fleeing Melisande.

ACT V

Melisande's Bedchamber. Melisande has given birth to a child, but her life hangs upon a thread. Golaud attends upon her, remorseful for what he has done. She does not seem to remember. He questions her about Pelleas, but she returns evasive replies. She has loved him, but she is innocent of wrong-doing. Arkel and the physician bid him cease troubling her. She is shown her child, but is too weak to hold it. The servants enter silently. Golaud bids them begone, but they only fall upon their knees in prayer. The physician looks at his patient and says that they are right. Melisande is dead.

THE PERFECT FOOL

Opera in One Act. Words and Music by Gustav Holst. First produced by the British National Opera Company at Covent Garden, May 14, 1923.

SCENE : Nowhere in particular.

TIME : Equally vague.

CHARACTERS

THE FOOL [Speaking Part].
THE WIZARD [Baritone].
THE TROUBADOUR [Tenor].
HIS RETAINERS [Bassos].
THE TRAVELLER [Basso].
THE SHEPHERD [Speaking Part].
THE FOOL'S MOTHER [Contralto].
THE PRINCESS [Soprano].
THREE GIRLS [Sopranos].

Chorus of Courtiers and Subjects of the Princess ; Ballet of the Spirits of Earth, Water, and Fire.

ARGUMENT

The author, in a foreword to this quaint and whimsical operatic adventure, requests that " the spirit of high comedy shall be maintained throughout." And if it should not be, the whole work will certainly fail of its effect. A little humorous exaggeration on the part of the singers is indicated by the quality both of the words and of the music.[1]

Night time. The wizard is performing magic rites. He invokes the spirits of Earth, Air, and Fire, and they dance round him. He then falls asleep. The Fool's mother now enters, dragging her drowsy son after her. *He* falls asleep. His mother then reveals that when the boy was born wise men foretold that he would win a bride with a glance of his eye, kill a foe with a look, and achieve something impossible to every one else.

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Novello and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

The wizard now wakes, not in a very amiable mood. He has been brewing a magic potion which he intends to quaff before the arrival of the Princess, which may be expected almost immediately. It has been prophesied that she shall have as her husband "a man who does the deed no other can do," and she is coming to choose him. The wizard is hopeful of his chances—when once he shall have drunk the potion. It will make him who drinks it irresistible to women. As for any possible rivals, he need only stare at them hard enough, and they will be scorched to death. He then proceeds to practise his wooing-song. Impatient to prove the effects of the potion, he thinks for a moment of drinking half of it on the spot, and testing the result on the Fool's mother; but he abandons the idea with an energy very unflattering to her self-esteem. Composing himself again to slumber, he tells her to wake him when the Princess arrives.

Three young girls then come to draw water from a well at the back of the stage. Remembering the Wizard's remark that the potion which is to make him invincible tastes like simple water, the Fool's mother hastily pours the contents of the magic cup down her son's throat, and then asks the girls to refill it from the well—which they do. To the sound of trumpets the Princess enters, announcing that the time has come for the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning her destined consort. Aroused by the Fool's mother, the wizard wakes up, tosses off the magic cup, and begins to sing his wooing-song. He is puzzled by the Princess's lack of enthusiasm, and by the smiles of the courtiers. All attempts to scorch them to death by the power of his glance are equally unavailing. He departs in high dudgeon, to weave fresh spells.

The Troubadour now arrives, attended by his retainers, and tries his luck, but with no success. The Traveller follows, and does the same, with the same result. He wakes the Fool by stumbling over him, and the Fool rises and comes forward. Whenever the Princess beholds the sleepy youth, she hails him as her "soul's delight." The Fool promptly falls asleep again. Every one concludes that the Princess is bewitched.

A shepherd now rushes on to the stage with the news that a great fire has broken out and is sweeping towards them. Confusion reigns. Flames spring up. The Wizard is seen in the back-

ground, urging the Fire Spirits forward. Every one flees, except the Princess, the Fool's mother, and the still-slumbering Fool. The mother arouses her son, and compels him to turn and look steadily at the Wizard. Immediately the Fire Spirits waver, and then begin to dance towards the Wizard, who is soon consumed to ashes, only his hat remaining intact. The fire dies down, and the Princess overwhelms the Fool with sweet words. When she marvels at his unresponsiveness, the mother explains that her son *has* done what no other man could do—to wit, he has looked at the Princess without falling in love with her. The Chief Priest enters, bearing a crown, which he is about to set upon the Fool's head, when the Fool yawns, and lapses once more into slumber.

PRINCE IGOR

Opera in Four Acts with a Prologue. Text and music by A. P. Borodin The Opera was completed after the Composer's death by N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov and A. K. Glazounov. First produced at the Maryinsky Theatre Leningrad, October 23, 1890.

SCENE: The Town of Pontivle in Russia and the Camp of the Polovtsy.

TIME: 1185.

CHARACTERS

IGOR SVYATOSLAVISCH, *Prince of Seversk* [Baritone].
JAROSLAWNA, *his wife in second marriage* [Soprano].
WLADIMIR IGOREWITSCH, *his son by his first wife* [Tenor].
WLADIMIR GALITSKY, *brother of Princess Jaroslawna* [High Basso].
KONTSCHAK, *a khan of the Polovtsy* [Basso].
GZAK, *a khan of the Polovtsy* [Basso].
KONTSCHAKOWNA, *the daughter of Khan Kontschak* [Mezzo-Soprano].
OWLUR, *a Christian Polovets* [Tenor].
SKULA, *a goudok-player* [Basso].
EROSCHKA, *a goudok-player* [Tenor].
PRINCESS JAROSLAWNA'S OLD NURSE [Soprano].

Russian Princes and Princesses, Boyards, Elders, Russian Warriors and Maidens, Chieftains of the Polovtsy, Russian Prisoners of War, Polovets, Soldiers, etc.

ARGUMENT

Half legendary and half historical, the story of Prince Igor is based upon the earliest of Russian mediæval epics, and deals with the struggles of Christian Russia against the pagan hordes from the south-west.

PROLOGUE

A Square in Pontivle. Prince Igor and his troops are about to depart for the Tatar Wars, and the folk are assembled to see them as they come from the Cathedral. As they acclaim

their Prince the sun is eclipsed, and all are filled with evil forebodings. The boyards advise delay, but Prince Igor refuses to listen either to them or to his wife's entreaties. He confides her to the care of her brother, Prince Galitsky, and with his son, Wladimir, rides away at the head of his troops.

ACT I

Scene 1. The Courtyard of Prince Galitsky's House. Two deserters from the army, Skula and Eroschka, hear that Galitsky or his boon companions have carried off a young girl. Galitsky is giving himself up to a life of pleasure and dissipation, and to the folk in his courtyard he paints a picture of the gaiety and joy of life in the city if he were chosen prince instead of Igor. A troupe of young girls comes in to implore Galitsky to set free their companion, carried off the night before, but they are driven away with threats and jeers. Skula and Eroschka drink with the people and sing songs in Galitsky's honour.

Scene 2. Jaroslawna's Apartments in the Terem. The Princess is oppressed with forebodings for her husband. Her sad thoughts are interrupted by the entrance of the young girls who have lost their companion, and who bring to her the complaint to which Galitsky refused to listen. The Prince now enters, but he only laughs at his sister's reproaches and threats, though he consents at last to release the girl. Some boyards bring the news that the Tatar Khan has utterly routed Prince Igor's army and captured the Prince and his son. The Polovtsy are advancing on the city, and the outskirts are already in flames. The tocsin rings out wildly to summon the townsfolk to a desperate effort for its defence.

ACT II

The Camp of the Polovtsy. Kontschakowna with her maidens is sitting before her tent singing. She has fallen in love with Prince Wladimir and he with her. In the distance are guards, who presently march by with their prisoners. As Wladimir passes Kontschakowna comes from her tent to meet him. When they have gone, Prince Igor enters, lamenting his fate and praying Heaven for his freedom. To him comes Owlur, a Tatar turned Christian, and offers to aid his flight from the

[illegible] Act [illegible] gives his word to the Khan and refuses to go. The Khan dismisses the spy, and the Khan Konchak consents to give the prisoners permission [illegible]. The others [illegible] gifts and finally threatens if Igor will swear never again to fight against the Khan he [illegible] the [illegible]. But Igor [illegible] the condition and continues to remain [illegible] of the [illegible]. The [illegible] and [illegible] the Prince the Khan offers [illegible] and [illegible] and the young [illegible] a wreath of wild [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] slave girls, and [illegible] warriors [illegible] to the dancing.

ACT III (Also [illegible])

The Outdoors in the Camp of the Polovtsy. The Polovtsy [illegible] assembled to greet the victorious warriors of Khan Gzak [illegible] return. Among [illegible] and guarding prisoners, Khan Konchak greets Gzak, and Prince Igor and Vladimir [illegible] that the Khan wishes have triumphed everywhere and that Putivlle has been sacked and burned. The Khan and Polovtsy go out, leaving Igor, Vladimir, and the other Russian captives lamenting the fate of their country. Igor and his son resolve to escape. Khan Konchak enters with Igor and prisoners of war. The Russian princes enter their tents, and soldiers [illegible] guard over the captives. Konchak enters and gives the guards [illegible], which makes them drunk. They engage in [illegible] and fall into a drunken slumber as midnight falls. Ovlur [illegible] enters Igor's tent and tells him he has made all ready for their flight. Konchakovna [illegible] to see Vladimir [illegible] for wishing to have her. He tells her that though he loves her he must go and [illegible] to follow his father, who calls to him. The Princess [illegible] a ring and gives it to Vladimir, who [illegible] and [illegible]. Konchak enters and orders them to leave the Prince [illegible] Igor. He then [illegible] Vladimir to be [illegible], but tells the Polovtsy that they will prepare to march on Russia the next day.

ACT IV

At Putivlle. The Princess Yaroslavna enters, grieving over the [illegible] which have befallen her city and people, and the

the loss of her husband. Gazing into the distance she sees two horsemen, one a Tatar, the other a Russian, in whom she recognizes her husband. When he enters the city he dismounts and hastens to embrace her with tears of joy. He tells her he will raise a new army and oppose the Tatar host again. Now the two deserters, Skula and Eroschka, enter and are terror-stricken on recognizing the Prince. They decide that the best way to save themselves is by sounding the alarm-bells and being the first to announce his homecoming to the townsfolk. The people come running in at the sound of the bells, and Igor and Jaroslawna come from the Kremlin to receive them. The scene closes amid rejoicings of the people, for whom hope dawns again.

LE PROPHÈTE

Grand Opera in Five Acts. Music by Giacomo Meyerbeer. Book by Eugène Scribe. First produced at Paris, April 6, 1849.

SCENE : In Dordrecht and Münster.

TIME : 1534–35 : during the Wars of Religion.

CHARACTERS

JOHN OF LEYDEN [Tenor].
JONAS, *an Anabaptist* [Tenor].
MATTHISEN, *an Anabaptist* [Basso].
ZACHARIAS, *an Anabaptist* [Basso].
COUNT OBERTHAL [Baritone].
FIDES, *John's mother* [Mezzo].
BERTHA, *his betrothed* [Soprano].

ARGUMENT

This grandiose and ambitious opera has as a background the Low Countries, the scene of so much religious effervescence and tumult, and of the rise of so many Protestant sects, in the first half of the sixteenth century.

ACT I

Count Oberthal's Castle. Fides, the hostess of the tavern at Dordrecht, comes to seek the Count's formal permission for the marriage of her son, John of Leyden, to Bertha, a village beauty, whom she brings with her. Oberthal, charmed by the girl, refuses his consent, and carries her off. Three Anabaptists then come upon the scene, and give eloquent expression to their views on the subject of tyrants. They and their fellows, a dangerously numerous body, are in revolt against authority, and are stirring up the common folk to rebellion.

ACT II

The Inn at Dordrecht. Peasants and Anabaptists carousing. John awaits Bertha's return from the castle. The Anabaptists

try to induce him to throw in his lot with them. Bertha rushes in, fleeing from the Count, who soon enters in pursuit. She seeks refuge in John's arms, but when the Count threatens to kill Fides, whom he holds prisoner, if John does not relinquish his bride to him, filial love proves stronger than all other sentiments, and Bertha is sacrificed. None the less, John is athirst for revenge, and when the Anabaptists renew their urging, he consents not only to join them, but to lead the attack on Münster, where Oberthal's father is besieged.

ACT III

The Anabaptist Camp outside the walls of Münster. The besieging army is in high spirits. Some noblemen have been captured, and forced to pay stiff ransoms. A ballet on the ice marks the general joy. Oberthal has crept among them in disguise, and he hears them planning an immediate assault on the town. At the critical moment he is recognized, and his death seems imminent, when, in the course of a heated exchange of remarks with John, he mentions the fact that Bertha has escaped. John tells his followers to spare the Count's life for the moment. He shall be judged later—by Bertha. The excesses and the bloody deeds of his fanatical followers have disconcerted John so much that he is on the point of relinquishing his command of the army when news comes that a large force is emerging from Münster and marching to attack the Anabaptists. John's mood changes. Praying to God for victory, he resolves to lead his men to the assault.

ACT IV

The Cathedral Square of Münster. The city has been captured by the Anabaptists, who now hail their victorious leader as a heaven-born Prophet. Fides and Bertha have made their way into the city, in the wake of the victors, and have been borne along by the crowd streaming toward the cathedral where John is to be solemnly crowned. Neither of the women is aware of the identity of the great Prophet whom the people delight to honour. When John enters, gorgeously robed, and begins to speak, Fides utters a loud cry of joy: "My son!" But John has claimed divine origin. His claim will fall to the

ground if he acknowledges the hostess of the Inn at Dordrecht as his mother. So he ruthlessly repudiates her. She is an imposter. If she dares again claim him as her son, he will prove his divinity by baring his breast to a drawn sword. Fides at once recants. No, she was wrong. This is not her son.

ACT V

The Palace of Münster. Three Anabaptists, weary of their exacting and dictatorial Prophet, plot to hand him over to the German Emperor in exchange for a free pardon for themselves. John now has a secret interview with his mother, whose pardon he implores. This she will grant only on condition that he abandons the Anabaptists, whose deeds have struck horror through the land, and returns to Leyden. Meanwhile Bertha, in order to rid the world of the Prophet, has kindled a slow fire in the dungeons beneath the palace, a fire which will in time reach the powder-magazine. She does not know that the abhorred Prophet is her former lover. When she realizes that he is actually John of Leyden, she stabs herself in despair. John now decides that he has paid too great a price for power. Faced by treachery and danger without and within, he surrenders to his fate. While the unconscious revellers carouse in the banqueting-hall, he stands quietly, with his mother at his side, waiting for the catastrophe which they both know must come soon. Presently flames and smoke rise from the floor, and then the roof falls in a blazing ruin and overwhelms them all.

RIGOLETTO

Tragic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book by Piave, after Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse." First produced at the Fenice Theatre, Venice, March 11, 1851.

SCENE: Mantua.

TIME: The Sixteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF MANTUA [Tenor].
RIGOLETTO, *his jester and attendant* [Baritone].
GILDA, *daughter of Rigoletto* [Soprano].
COUNT MONTERONE [Basso].
COUNT CEPRANO [Baritone].
COUNTESS CEPRANO [Soprano].
SPARAFUCILE, *an assassin* [Basso].
MADDALENA, *his sister* [Mezzo-Soprano].
GIOVANNA, *friend of Maddalena* [Contralto].
BORSA, *a Courtier* [Tenor].

Officers, Courtiers, Ladies, Attendants, Servants.

ARGUMENT

"Rigoletto" is an intense tragedy of unbridled desires and retributive vengeance. Based upon Hugo's powerful drama of mediæval court life, "Le Roi s'Amuse," it is unrelieved by pleasant themes, but has been lastingly successful because of the closely knit plot and the brilliant music with which Verdi has invested it.

ACT I

An Open Court in the Duke's Palace. The Duke of Mantua, one of the most profligate of rulers, devotes his leisure moments to the pursuit of ladies, and no house high or low is safe from his attentions. The courtiers are embittered, and especially so against Rigoletto, his jester and familiar, who aids him in these adventures. Rigoletto, though deformed, has a keen mind. His own daughter, a beautiful young girl, has been kept carefully hidden away. He can therefore laugh loudly with the

Duke when the latter tells of having fallen in love with a fair face he has seen at church, and he promises his master another rare adventure. At the same time the Duke is planning an intrigue with the Countess Ceprano, which causes the Count to form a cabal against Rigoletto. The Count Monterone also swears vengeance against both Duke and jester because of the wronging of his daughter. When he comes with his complaint the jester makes merry. Monterone, enraged, turns and hurls a father's curse against both. The Duke treats the matter lightly, but the jester is overcome with terror.

ACT II

A Secluded Street in Front of Rigoletto's House. Still thinking of the curse, the jester has an interview with Sparafucile, a hired assassin, who promises to aid him whenever necessary. Rigoletto then enters his garden by a side gate and is met by Gilda, his daughter, whom he loves and guards jealously. She answers his questions as to her coming and going, but conceals from him the fact that she has seen a young man at church who has shown her marked attention. It was the Duke, posing as a student. The courtiers, who hate Rigoletto, plan to abduct this girl, whom they believe to be Rigoletto's mistress, and actually entice him to assist them by telling him that the Countess Ceprano is their object. He accompanies them blindfolded, and while blinded they place a scaling-ladder against his own house and carry off Gilda. He discovers the ruse too late to rescue her, and again remembers the curse.

ACT III

Apartment in the Palace. Rigoletto follows his daughter to the palace, but when arrived there he finds that she is with the Duke. In an agony of apprehension he sings and jests and meanwhile tries to find some way of reaching them. But the courtiers, believing Gilda to have been only his mistress and glad of this chance to avenge themselves upon him, prevent him from leaving the room. Finally in an agony he confesses that she is his daughter, and begs to be allowed to seek her, but all to no purpose. At the height of their merriment and his despair, Gilda rushes in. The others retire, leaving father

and daughter alone. His worst fears have been realized. She has been dishonoured. Monterone passes by, and Rigoletto tells him his curse has been effective. "Not so," says Monterone: "the Duke is still happy!" "I join you in vengeance against him!" exclaims Rigoletto.

ACT IV

A Retired Street. Rigoletto shudders to learn that Gilda still loves the Duke and would shield him from vengeance. He therefore hastens to the home of the murderer, Sparafucile, and bargains with him that he shall slay the first person who enters the house, regardless of whom it may be. The bandit agrees. The jester then lures the Duke to the house by means of the bandit's sister, Maddalena. Even when Gilda overhears and sees this new proof of the Duke's perfidy she cannot steel her heart against him, but resolves instead to sacrifice herself to save him. A thunderstorm prevents the Duke from leaving the house at once, and Maddalena pleads with her brother to spare their guest, who has retired to an upper chamber. The assassin is unwilling; a bargain is a bargain. At last he agrees to spare him provided another victim is found by midnight. Gilda, on the outside, overhears and presents herself in boy's clothes. True to his word, Sparafucile stabs her. Rigoletto comes to claim the body, which has been placed in a sack. While gloating over his vengeance he hears the voice of the Duke singing. Astounded, he tears open the sack and finds the body of his daughter.

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN
[THE RING OF THE NIBELUNGS]

I. DAS RHEINGOLD

[*The Rhine-Gold.*] *A Music-Drama in Four Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Munich, September* 22, 1869, *and authoritatively at Bayreuth, August* 3, 1876.

SCENE : Germany and the Upper and Nether worlds.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

WOTAN, *the mighty* [Basso].
FRICKA, *his spouse* [Mezzo-Soprano].
DONNER, *god of thunder* [Basso].
FRÖH, *god of rain* [Baritone].
LOKI, *god of fire* [Tenor].
FREYA, *goddess of love* [Soprano].
ALBERICH, *a dwarf* [Baritone].
MIME, *a smith* [Tenor].
WOGLINDE, *Rhine-maiden* [Soprano].
WELLGUNDE, *Rhine-maiden* [Soprano].
FLOSSHILDE, *Rhine-maiden* [Contralto].
FAFNER, *a giant* [Basso].
FASOLT, *a giant* [Basso].
ERDA, *spirit of the Earth* [Contralto].

Gods and Goddesses, Dwarfs, and Spirits.

ARGUMENT

"Rheingold," the first of the four operas forming the "Ring" series, tells the story of how the magic ring came to be made, and how its curse rested upon all who came in contact with it, whether gods or men.[1]

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Schott and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of these operas.

ACT I

The Bottom of the River Rhine. Down in the bed of the River Rhine a mass of pure gold has been hidden. It is magic treasure conferring upon its owner boundless power, but whoever possesses it must forswear love. The three Rhine-maidens have been entrusted with the duty of guarding the gold, and they turn the task into a sport, singing and dancing among the grottoes beneath the water, but never venturing far from their charge. Alberich the dwarf, greedy for gold, surprises them one morning in their games. They coquet with him and lead him on, finally letting him know the secret of the gold. He pretends to be interested in them and indifferent to the treasure, but when their carelessness gives him an opportunity he seizes upon the glittering mass and makes off with it, declaring that he will forswear love for ever in order to be master of the world.

ACT II

The Gardens of Walhalla, Abode of the Gods. The giants Fasolt and Fafner have built the beautiful castle Walhalla for the abode of the gods. Loki, the god of fire, who is the embodiment of deceit, has persuaded Wotan the mighty to accept the giants' terms for their labour, and when they have completed the stupendous task they demand Freya, goddess of love, as their reward and carry her off despite the entreaties of all the other immortals. Without the presence of Freya the flowers wither and die, the trees refuse to bear fruit, and the gods begin to grow old. The only way in which the giants can be induced to restore the goddess is by a bribe of the magic gold. Wotan and Loki go in search of this treasure, which is now jealously guarded by the dwarfs in the earth-caverns.

ACT III

The Dwarfs' Caverns. Alberich gloats over his treasure, and to watch over it more carefully he has commanded Mime the smith to make for him a tarn-helm or invisible cap which enables him to assume any shape he pleases. He has also fashioned from the gold a ring which confers upon its wearer power over gods and men. Wotan and Loki enter to confer

with Alberich and he boastingly displays his powers by changing himself first into a dragon and then into a toad—the last at a sly suggestion from Loki. Wotan then quickly places his foot upon the toad, and will not release his squirming victim until he has given up all his treasures, including the cap and ring. Alberich, however, puts a curse upon all who shall hereafter wear the ring.

ACT IV

The Gardens of Walhalla. The gods carry the gold in triumph to Walhalla and the giants are summoned to the parley. They return with Freya and the treasure is heaped before her to excite their cupidity. Wotan secretly hopes to retain the cap and the ring, but they insist upon these also and threaten otherwise to carry off the goddess again. Wotan is compelled to yield, although he foresees in the terms the ultimate destruction of the gods. The curse of the ring is shown in an immediate quarrel between the giants, in which Fafner kills Fasolt. While the gods pass over a rainbow bridge to their new mansion of Walhalla, the voices of the Rhine-maidens are heard below lamenting their loss.

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

II. DIE WALKÜRE

[*The Valkyries.*] *Music-Drama in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Munich, June 26, 1870, and authoritatively at Bayreuth, August 14, 1876.*

SCENE : The Forests of Germany.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

WOTAN, *the mighty* [Basso].
FRICKA, *his spouse* [Mezzo-Soprano].
HUNDING, *a warrior* [Basso].
SIEGLINDE, *his wife* [Soprano].
SIEGMUND, *her brother* [Tenor].
BRUNHILDE, a *Valkyr* [Soprano].
OTHER VALKYRIES [Sopranos].

ARGUMENT

In order to understand the purport of "Die Walküre" as related to the "Ring" a certain amount of narrative is necessary which is not represented upon the stage.
Wotan, foreseeing the doom of the gods because they are pledged to obey the power of the magic ring, endeavours to protect Walhalla by creating a band of Valkyries or warrior-maidens; their duty is to convey on their winged steeds the bodies of the noblest warriors, slain upon the field of battle, to the abode of the gods, where the warriors will live again, a mighty race to defend Walhalla. Upon the earth, also, Wotan has begotten two children of his own, Siegmund and Sieglinde, who grow up in ignorance of each other.

ACT I

The Forest Hut of Hunding. The hut of the warrior Hunding is built around the great trunk of an ash-tree, which pierces the centre of the roof. Here Hunding dwells with his wife, Sieglinde, whom he carried away from her home in childhood,

against her will. She has been promised a protector, however, by a mysterious stranger who drives his sword up to the hilt in the ash; and the protector will be known by his ability to withdraw the weapon.

On the night when the scene opens Hunding is away and Sieglinde opens the door to an exhausted stranger who begs food and drink. It is Siegmund, a mortal enemy of Hunding, who has taken refuge here against his foes. Hunding, returning, finds him here and grants him hospitality for the night, but challenges him to combat the next morning. Meanwhile Siegmund and Sieglinde feel irresistibly drawn to each other. When Hunding retires the woman prepares a sleeping potion which holds him in a stupor. She tells her story to Siegmund and they discover that they are brother and sister. He finds that he can easily draw the sword from the ash (it was Wotan who placed it there), and the two flee forth into the forest.

ACT II

A Mountain Pass. It has been the will of Wotan that his two earth children shall meet and mate, but he finds unexpected opposition to his plan from Fricka, his spouse. She is scandalized by this infraction of marital laws, and demands that he shall punish the guilty pair. He is finally prevailed upon to summon Brunhilde, his favourite among the Valkyr maidens, and he charges her to deliver over Siegmund to his enemy. Brunhilde pleads for the warrior but in vain; she must on no account disobey this mandate even though she knows it is against the wishes of Wotan himself. She encounters the lovers in a mountain pass, whither they are being pursued by Hunding, and warns Siegmund of his fate; then won over by his pleas she resolves to shield him at any cost. Hunding arrives and engages him in battle. The Valkyr protects Siegmund. Amid thunder and lightning Wotan appears and shivers Siegmund's sword, and the latter is slain by Hunding, who falls in turn by a stroke from Wotan's spear. Brunhilde flees from the wrath of Wotan, carrying with her Sieglinde, whom she conceals.

ACT III

Haunt of the Valkyries. Wotan goes forth to seek and punish his disobedient Valkyr. Brunhilde implores her sisters to succour

her, but they are fearful of Wotan's anger. They promise, however, to watch over Sieglinde. The latter is comforted by Brunhilde and told that she shall have a son who will prove the greatest of heroes; meanwhile she is to hide from gods and men and preserve the broken bits of the sword of Siegmund. Wotan approaches and orders Brunhilde to stand before him. A stormy and pathetic scene ensues in which he at first consigns her harshly to a fate worse than death. She is banished from Walhalla and is to fall asleep, to be claimed upon waking by the first passer-by. Her entreaties finally mitigate this sentence, and Wotan places her upon an almost inaccessible mountain peak hedged round about by magic flames. Only a hero would pierce this circle of flames, and such a hero shall claim Brunhilde as his wife.

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

III. SIEGFRIED

Music-Drama in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Bayreuth, August 16, 1876.

SCENE : A Primeval Forest in Germany.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

WOTAN, *the mighty* [Basso].
SIEGFRIED, *the hero* [Tenor].
MIME, *the smith* [Tenor].
ALBERICH, *the dwarf* [Baritone]
FAFNER, *the dragon* [Basso].
BRUNHILDE, *a Valkyr* [Soprano].
THE WOOD BIRD [Soprano].

ARGUMENT

" Siegfried " continues the story of the Ring at a period some twenty years later than the events of " Die Walküre."
As Brunhilde has foretold, Sieglinde bears a son to the slain Siegmund, and she also dies at the child's birth. He is sheltered by Mime, the dwarf, who teaches him the smith's trade. But Siegfried, as he is called, has the blood of warriors and hunters in his veins, and soon domineers over the craven fellow.

ACT I

The Forest Forge of Mime. When Siegfried has arrived at young manhood he orders Mime to forge a sword for him ; but none which is made suits him ; he speedily breaks them all. The fragments of Siegmund's sword have been preserved, and one day in the young man's absence Wotan enters the smithy and tells Mime that Siegfried is destined to forge from these fragments an invincible weapon. This makes Mime more frightened than ever, but he cannot stay the hand of fate.

The young hunter returning is disgusted with Mime's work, and seizing the pieces of the old sword forges his own weapon. When it is cooled and tempered he tests it by splitting the anvil in two from top to bottom. He calls the weapon " Helpneed."

ACT II

The Forest before the Dragon's Cave. For all these years Fafner has guarded the magic gold jealously. The better to do so he has assumed the form of a dragon, who dwells within a cavern in the depths of the forest. On the outside loiters Alberich, the greedy dwarf, still trying to regain the treasure. Wotan finds him here and warns him that a hero is coming who is stronger than them all. Meanwhile Siegfried has been told of the dragon by Mime, who endeavours thus to frighten him, but the news only fires the young man's spirit and he resolves to christen the new sword in a combat with Fafner. On his way thither the Wood Bird sings to him warningly, but Siegfried does not understand and goes on his way. He summons Fafner from his lair and in the fight slays him. A drop of the dragon's blood touches his tongue and instantly he understands the wood voices. The Bird has told him that Mime is trying to poison him. He is also told of the magical properties of the ring, which he puts on. He kills Mime, and follows the Bird, who tells of other adventures in store. The sleeping Brunhilde on the mountain-top, surrounded by fire, awaits a hero to awaken her. The Bird shows him the path up the mountain.

ACT III

A Mountain Pass. Erda, the earth-spirit, has warned Wotan of the impending doom of the gods. He therefore resolves to stop Siegfried in his journey up the mountain. But the latter, undaunted, shivers the great Wotan's spear with his sword, Helpneed, and Wotan stands aside, knowing that the progress of events cannot be stayed. Neither is Siegfried deterred by the wall of flame which encircles the peak. He pushes through it and it dies away, leaving him unscathed. He finds Brunhilde in her warrior's garb and awakens her. She discovers his identity and willingly forgoes her immortal qualities for the sake of his love.

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

IV. GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

[*The Dusk of the Gods.*] *Music-Drama in a Prelude and Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced a Bayreuth, August* 17, 1876.

SCENE : A Primeval Forest in Germany.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

SIEGFRIED, *the hero* [Tenor].
BRUNHILDE, *the Valkyr* [Soprano].
GUNTHER, *a king* [Baritone].
GUTRUNE, *his sister* [Soprano].
ALBERICH, *the dwarf* [Baritone].
HAGEN, *his son* [Basso].
VALTRAUTE, *a Valkyr* [Mezzo-Soprano].
THE NORNS, *spinners of fate* [Mezzo-Soprano].
THE RHINE-MAIDENS [Sopranos].

ARGUMENT

The last of the "Ring," Götterdämmerung," brings to a close the adventures and fates of the chief characters. The downfall of the gods is at hand, and the curse of the ring completes its fatal mission.

PRELUDE

The Norns who control the fates of both men and gods weave their thread of life and it breaks. They know by this token that the destruction of all things is at hand. Siegfried parts from Brunhilde in order to go upon new adventures, but meanwhile gives her the ring to wear while he is gone. He takes with him the tarnhelm, or invisible cap, and Helpneed, the sword, and Brunhilde lends him her steed to ride.

ACT I

Scene 1. Gunther's Court. Siegfried proceeds to the court of Gunther, a powerful king, who welcomes him cordially. Hagen, the cunning son of Alberich, is one of the court, and knowing of Siegfried's deeds, he brews the hero a drink which causes him to forget all his past. The memory of Brunhilde fades away, and he asks of Gunther the hand of his fair sister Gutrune in marriage. The King consents on condition that Brunhilde is secured for himself, and the forgetful Siegfried agrees to go with Gunther and compel her to yield.

Scene 2. A Mountain Pass. While Brunhilde awaits the return of her warrior, Valtraute, another Valkyr maiden, comes to plead with her to restore the ring to the Rhine-maidens. Thus only can the gods be spared from destruction. But Brunhilde answers scornfully that the gods have not been kind to her, and besides the ring is not her own. By means of the tarnhelm, Siegfried assumes the shape of Gunther and comes to claim Brunhilde as his wife. She struggles against him but is overpowered, and he wrests the ring from her finger. She is compelled to follow him back to Gunther's court.

ACT II

Gunther's Court. The King publicly proclaims Brunhilde as his Queen, and gives Siegfried the hand of Gutrune. Brunhilde cannot understand this arrangement and suspects treachery when she sees the ring on Siegfried's hand. She upbraids him for fickleness and falseness, but he is still under the influence of the drug and pays little heed to her. Her former love turns to rage and she listens willingly to Hagen's plots to slay Siegfried. Hagen believes that he can thus secure the ring for himself. They tell Gunther that Siegfried has been unfaithful with respect to Brunhilde; and the King finally agrees to his destruction.

ACT III

Banks of the River Rhine. While Siegfried is out upon a hunting expedition the Rhine-maidens beseech him to restore the ring to them, telling him that thus only can he escape death. But Siegfried is fearless and will not yield it up under

a threat. Gunther, Hagen, and other hunters join him, and while they rest they ask Siegfried to relate his adventures. The drug has begun to wear off, and Siegfried tells of his past. When he comes to the meeting with Brunhilde he stops, puzzled, to watch the flight of some ravens. At this moment Hagen drives his spear in between Siegfried's shoulders, and the latter falls dying. But his memory is clear and he calls for Brunhilde. Both Hagen and Gunther try to seize the ring, and in the struggle the King is killed. The retainers are in an uproar. Gutrune bewails the loss of her husband and her brother. But Brunhilde, who has learned the truth, comes in and bids the tumult cease. She orders a funeral pyre to be built, and the body of Siegfried to be placed thereon. Mounting it she also is consumed. The waters of the Rhine rise and engulf all, including Hagen, who has tried to seize the ring, and the cursed emblem is at last restored to its rightful owners. In the sky a great blaze is seen. It is the destruction of Walhalla with all the gods.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Tragic Opera in Five Acts. Music by Charles François Gounod. Book by Barbier and Carré, after the play by Shakespeare. First produced at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, April 27, 1867.

SCENE : Verona.

TIME : The Fourteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

THE PRINCE OF VERONA [Basso].
COUNT OF PARIS, *his kinsman* [Baritone].
CAPULET, *a nobleman* [Basso].
JULIET, *his daughter* [Soprano].
GERTRUDE, *her nurse* [Contralto].
TYBALT, *nephew to Capulet* [Tenor].
ROMEO, *a Montague* [Tenor].
MERCUTIO, *his friend* [Baritone].
STEFANO, *page to Romeo* [Soprano].
BENVOLIO, *friend of Romeo* [Tenor].
GREGORIO, *servant to Capulet* [Baritone].
FRIAR LAURENCE [Basso].

Friends of Capulet and Montague, Retainers of the Prince, etc.

ARGUMENT

Gounod's opera follows closely the accepted version of the story of "Romeo and Juliet," following the plot, by acts, of Shakespeare's drama. Still earlier versions were the French tale of Boisteau and the Italian novel of Bandello.

Between the Veronese houses of Capulet and Montague exists a bitter enmity. Open warfare between the factions has proceeded until the Prince threatens the banishment of the next person to engage in the quarrel.

ACT I

Reception Hall in the Mansion of Capulet. The head of the house of Capulet gives a *fête* in honour of his daughter, Juliet.

Romeo, a Montague, comes unbidden to the house and immediately falls desperately in love with the fair young heiress. She likewise has eyes for none but him. Tybalt, a kinsman of Capulet, discovers the intruder's identity and wishes to draw upon him, but is prevented by the host, who will not override the laws of hospitality.

ACT II

Capulet's Garden. Romeo lingers beneath the balcony of Juliet, and is overjoyed to hear her come forth and confess to the moon and stars her love for the young stranger. He makes his presence known, and the two plight their troth. Servants of Capulet interrupt them, but only temporarily. They plan a speedy marriage.

ACT III

Scene 1. Friar Laurence's Cell. The two lovers meet as agreed at the cell of Friar Laurence and he consents to unite them, thinking that this will bring about peace between the warring families.

Scene 2. A City Street. While walking abroad with his friends, Romeo is accosted by Tybalt, who rails at him for having gone to the house of the Capulets. Romeo is doubly anxious to keep the peace at this time and answers him mildly. But soft words will not satisfy either party. Mercutio, a Montague, draws upon Tybalt and is slain by the latter. Romeo, in just vengeance, then crosses swords and slays Tybalt. The Prince orders his immediate banishment from the city.

ACT IV

Juliet's Bedchamber. Romeo comes to bid his bride farewell; he cannot tarry on pain of death. When he is gone Capulet comes to inform his daughter that a wedding has been arranged between her and the Count of Paris. She pleads for delay, but unavailingly, and she dares not tell her father of her existing marriage. In despair she consults the friar, who gives her a sleeping potion which causes the semblance of death. She is to be entombed, and Romeo is to be informed of the plan and rescue her.

ACT V

The Tomb of the Capulets. Before Romeo can receive word from the friar that Juliet's death is feigned, he hears that she is no more. He hastens back to Verona and the tomb where she lies. At the gate he encounters Paris and strikes him to the ground. Within he finds his bride apparently lifeless. He drinks a vial of poison and casts himself upon her bier. At this moment she awakens from her trance and learns what he has done. He perishes in her arms, and she seizes his dagger and stabs herself.

DER ROSENKAVALIER

[*The Rose-Bearer.*] *Comic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Strauss. Book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. First produced at Dresden, January* 26, 1911.

SCENE : Vienna.

TIME : The early years of the reign of Maria Theresa.

CHARACTERS

PRINCESS VON WERDENBERG [Soprano].
BARON OCHS OF LERCHENAU [Basso].
OCTAVIAN, *a young gentleman of noble family* [Mezzo-Soprano].
HERR VON FANINAL, *a rich merchant, newly ennobled* [High Baritone].
SOPHIA, *his daughter* [High Soprano].

Attendants, Servants, Orphans of Noble Family, Courtiers, Musicians, Watchmen, Children, various Personages of suspicious appearance.

ARGUMENT

" Der Rosenkavalier " has been described as " the greatest comic opera since ' Figaro.' " Though slight, the plot is amusing and well carried out. The music is brilliant, if somewhat fantastic, and is strongly imbued throughout with wit, that quality so rarely found in music.[1]

ACT I

Boudoir of the Princess. During her husband's absence the Princess von Werdenberg amuses herself by encouraging the devotion of Octavian, a young cavalier, seventeen years of age. An ardent love scene is interrupted by the entrance of the impecunious and disreputable old Baron Ochs. Octavian having no time to escape, and thinking it to be the Princess's husband, hurriedly dons the clothes of her maid. The Baron is anxious to consult the Princess in regard to a proposed match with Sophia, the daughter of a recently ennobled merchant, but his story is much interrupted by his amorous attentions to

[1] *Der Rosenkavalier* : Copyright, MCMX, by Adolph Fürstner, Berlin.

the supposed maid, "Mariandel," whom he ogles violently. The Princess is urged to suggest a suitable messenger to bear to Sophia the Baron's *gage d'amour*, a silver rose. She names Octavian, and he is entrusted with the errand.

ACT II

A room in the house of Faninal. Faninal takes leave of Sophia and departs, promising to return with her noble bridegroom. Meanwhile Octavian enters with the silver rose. The inevitable happens—Octavian and Sophia fall madly in love with each other, and the beauty and elegance of the young cavalier only make Sophia the more disgusted with the disreputable old Baron, who is ceremoniously presented to her by her father. His coarse manners and attempted gallantries offend Sophia and enrage Octavian, who challenges the Baron to a duel and succeeds in wounding him slightly. A tremendous hubbub ensues. The Baron thinks himself in a dying condition, various people rush to minister to him, Sophia declares that nothing will induce her to marry the Baron, while Faninal insists that she shall do so. Sophia and Octavian concoct a plot between them, the object of which is to cause Ochs to be discovered under compromising circumstances. In pursuance of this a letter is delivered to the Baron purporting to come from "Mariandel," who has attracted him so greatly. An assignation is made.

ACT III

A private room at an Inn. Octavian appears, dressed as "Mariandel," the maid. Various suspicious-looking persons are disposed about the room in hiding-places. Finally Baron Ochs appears to keep his appointment. His enjoyment, however, is marred, first by the resemblance of "Mariandel" to Octavian, the young cavalier who wounded him, then by the appearance of the various spies, of the landlord and waiters, of a woman who claims him as her husband, and four little children who hail him shrilly as "papa," of the Commissary of Police, of the enraged Faninal, and finally of the Princess. The Baron finally departs in the midst of a clamorous host presenting bills. The Princess gracefully gives Octavian his freedom and the young lovers are made happy.

SALOME

Tragic Opera in One Act. Music by Richard Strauss. Book adapted from the romance of Oscar Wilde. First produced at Dresden, December 9, 1905.

SCENE : Tiberias, the Capital of Herod in Galilee.

TIME : A.D. 30.

CHARACTERS

HEROD, *Tetrarch of Galilee* [Tenor].
HERODIAS, *his wife* [Mezzo-Soprano].
SALOME, *her daughter, and the King's stepdaughter* [Soprano].
JOHN THE BAPTIST, *a prophet* [Baritone].
NARRABOTH, *a Syrian captain* [Tenor].
A PAGE [Contralto].

Jews, Courtiers, Soldiers, Priests, Servants.

ARGUMENT

"Salome" is a story of frank sensuality based upon Wilde's romance, itself a variant of the scriptural account of the death of John the Baptist.[1]

The Palace of Herod. Salome, the beautiful but unprincipled stepdaughter of King Herod, falls passionately in love with John the Baptist, the prophet of the wilderness. Because of his bold speech against Herod and Herodias John has been cast into a deep dungeon. There the King holds him, not caring to take further action for fear of displeasing the Jews. Salome is filled with an unholy desire to kiss the prophet's lips and fondle his long uncut tresses. She persuades Narraboth, a captain who is in love with her, to bring the prisoner before her. When the captain finds that she loves only John, he kills himself ; but Salome gives little heed to this in the joy of having the prophet in her clutches. John, however, rejects all her advances, bidding her repent. Filled with rage, she has him cast again into the dungeon and bides her time.

[1] *Salome* : Copyright, MCMV, by Adolph Fürstner, Berlin.

The opportunity is soon offered when Herod holds a feast, at which Salome appears scantily clad and dances before the guests. The King is so pleased that he bids her name her own reward. She replies that she desires only the head of John the Baptist. The King objects ; he is fearful of an uprising ; he offers her instead his treasures or half his kingdom ; but she is obdurate. In desperation the King gives the fatal signal. A dull blow is heard and a moment later the executioner appears with the gory head. Salome is wild with delight. She fondles the trophy as though it were alive, kissing the lips. In disgust and horror the King orders her to be put to death, and the soldiers crush her beneath their shields.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

Dramatic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Camille Saint-Saens. Book by Ferdinand Lemaire. First produced at Weimar, December 2, 1877.

SCENE : Gaza and vicinity, in Palestine.

TIME : 1150 B.C.

CHARACTERS

SAMSON, *a prophet of Israel* [Tenor].
DELILAH, *a Philistine woman* [Mezzo-Soprano].
ABIMELECH, *a Philistine officer* [Basso].
HIGH PRIEST OF DAGON [Baritone].
A PHILISTINE MESSENGER [Tenor].

Hebrews, Philistines, Priests, Maidens, etc.

ARGUMENT

The Biblical story of Samson and Delilah is faithfully reproduced in this opera, which depicts in both text and music the dramatic scenes in the life of Israel's warrior-prophet whose power was wrested from him by a woman.[1]

ACT I

An Open Square in Gaza. The people of Israel have been overcome by their enemies the Philistines, and now pray for deliverance. Samson, their leader and a man of mighty deeds, advises them to be patient. During their devotions Abimelech, the satrap of Gaza, comes out of the temple and ridicules them and their God. Samson turns upon him, wrests the sword from his hand, and kills him with one blow. Other Philistine soldiers rush to their leader's aid, but Samson easily withstands them all. The High Priest urges them forward, but they answer that they cannot overcome Samson ; he is invincible. Samson bids his people arm and avenge themselves. They sally forth, and a messenger reports that they are everywhere victorious.

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Durand et Cie, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

As the strong man returns, maidens come forth from the temple, led by Delilah, a Philistine woman. She praises Samson and says that she can resist him no longer. They dance about him, and his eyes follow every motion of the seductive Delilah.

ACT II

House of Delilah in the Valley of Sorak. Delilah, gorgeously attired, awaits the coming of Samson. He is tardy and she grows impatient. It was not thus when he was first in her power, but now he is seeking to break the shackles of love. While she waits, the High Priest enters. She must aid them to lay hold upon the warrior, he says; and he offers her wealth if she will deliver him into their hands. Delilah refuses the gold, replying that her hatred is enough. The High Priest departs and sets a secret guard about the house. After a time Samson appears, but with reluctance and shame. His God commands him to break off this unholy alliance and lead Israel out of bondage. Delilah makes use of all her wiles to bring him again under her power, singing the bewitching song, "My heart opes at thy voice." He again capitulates, and she pleads with him to tell her the secret of his strength. He refuses. She leaves him and enters the house. He hesitates and then follows her. The soldiers advance upon the house. She opens the window and calls to them triumphantly, while Samson is heard in a terrible cry, "Betrayed!"

ACT III

Scene 1. The Prison of Gaza. Samson has been shorn of his long hair, the secret of his strength, his eyes have been put out, and he is here seen grinding away at a mill-wheel. His captors mock at him, while from without come the voices of his countrymen filled with reproach. Presently he is seized and dragged forth to grace a triumphal procession.

Scene 2. Interior of the Temple of Dagon. Within an amphitheatre thronged with Philistines the High Priest worships before the god Dagon. Delilah assists him. Samson is sent for, to make sport for the people, and soon appears led by a child. A great shout arises at sight of the helpless man, and Delilah taunts him with his past weaknesses. The High Priest

pours a libation to Dagon as being far mightier than the vaunted God of the Hebrews. Samson sends the child away and prays his God for forgiveness, asking that his strength may be given back, only for a moment, in order that he may serve Israel. Then grasping the two marble pillars, between which he stands, he bends forward with all his might. The pillars crash down and with them the temple roof, burying all beneath them.

SĀVITRI

Vedic Opera in One Act. Words and Music by Gustav Holst. First produced by London School of Opera, Wellington Hall, St John's Wood, December 5, 1916.

SCENE : A wood in India.

TIME : Legendary Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

SATVAYAN, *a woodman* [Tenor].
SĀVITRI, *his wife* [Soprano].
DEATH [Basso].

ARGUMENT

This opera is founded on an episode in the classical Sanskrit epic, the "Mahabharata." It is adapted for performance in the open air, if desired, and no curtain is necessary. The characters make their entrance through an avenue or woodland path in the centre of the scene.[1]

When the action begins Death, the inexorable, has come to summon the woodman, Satvayan. In the wood Sāvitri hears his voice, and tries to shut out the sound with her hands against her ears. Presently Satvayan is audible far off, singing to his wife a lovesong with the refrain, "What wife in all the world is like to Sāvitri?" He comes and kneels beside her, and sings of Maya, the great illusion that pervades all things. Sāvitri crouches on the ground in terror, conscious of the approach of the hostile power. Satvayan, imagining that she fears some mortal foe, seizes his axe and makes ready to start off in pursuit. Then his hand falls powerless at his side as the form of Death slowly emerges from the trees. Sāvitri folds her husband in her arms, soothing and comforting him, but as Death halts beside them, Satvayan sinks lifeless to the earth. Sāvitri is not afraid

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

of the face of Death; she bids him welcome courteously, ready to follow if he calls. But he does not ask her to follow him. He offers her a boon for herself: let her ask nothing for her husband, whose heart is stilled for ever; but let her ask something for herself. Sāvitri asks for Life. "Why dost thou ask for Life?" retorts Death, "thou hast it now." Then she makes clear what she means by Life—not a solitary existence, but love, mating, motherhood, stalwart sons and bright-eyed daughters springing up like flowers around her path. Death yields. She shall have that boon. Then, says Sāvitri, Satvayan must live again. "Satvayan only can teach me the song, can open the gate to my path of flowers." Discomfited, but not daring to break his promise, Death recedes into the background. Satvayan opens his eyes. He thought there was a stranger in the wood who menaced him. Sāvitri tells him that it was a Holy One who blessed her. They depart together, singing. Death also departs, revealing as he goes that he, too, is Maya. In the distance Sāvitri's song, the same with which she soothed Satvayan when he lay helpless in her arms, dies softly away.

IL SEGRETO DI SUSANNA

[*Susannah's Secret.*] *Interlude in One Act. Music by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. Book by Enrico Golisciani. First produced at Munich, November 4, 1910.*

SCENE : A Drawing-room.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

IL CONTE GIL [Baritone].
LA CONTESSA SUSANNA [Soprano].
SANTE, *a butler* [Dumb].

ARGUMENT

" Susannah's Secret," though quite a little one, makes a cloud large enough to threaten the serenity of the honeymoon, owing to an otherwise rational man's detestation of smoking.[1]

Count Gil and his bride Susannah are spending their honeymoon at the Count's house in Piedmont. With the connivance of Sante, Susannah secretly indulges in her passion for smoking, but Gil detects the smell and questions Sante, who gives him to understand that no one in the house is responsible. The Count at once concludes that the culprit must be a visitor—a rival—and when, on embracing Susannah, he detects the odour in her hair he finds his suspicions confirmed. Susannah, thinking her husband's accusations refer to her little weakness, makes light of the affair, but Gil, with the graver matter in mind, is amazed at her levity, and a stormy scene ensues, culminating in the overturning of flowers, furniture, etc. When the air is comparatively clear again Susannah again arouses her husband's suspicion by reminding him of an engagement with friends. He leaves her, however, and goes out. Susannah is now free to light and enjoy a cigarette. Suddenly Gil returns and pounces

[1] My thanks are due to Herr Josef Weinberger, Vienna, for permission to use his text of the opera.

upon her, seizing her roughly by the hand and burning himself with the cigarette. Straightway he realizes the absurdity of his suspicions and in penitence even goes so far as to offer to acquire the obnoxious habit himself. They light cigarettes, and the serenity of the honeymoon returns.

THE SERAGLIO

Opera in Three Acts. Music by Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Words by Breitzner. First produced at Vienna, 1782.

SCENE : The Palace of Pasha Selim, on the Bosphorus.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

PASHA SELIM [Speaking Part].
OSMIN, *his gardener* [Basso].
BELMONTE, *betrothed to Costanze.*
PEDRILLO, *his manservant, temporarily in the suite of Costanze* [Baritone].
COSTANZE, *a Christian lady held captive by the Pasha* [Soprano].
BLONDE, *her maid* [Soprano].

Janissaries, Ladies of the Harem, etc.

ARGUMENT

The plot of this little opera is extremely simple, and the action brisk, easy, and gay. Mozart is said to have had a share in the writing of the libretto. "The Seraglio" may be regarded as marking the beginning of the German school of opera, and the definite breakaway from Italian conventions and traditions.[1]

ACT I

In the Garden of the Pasha. With the aid of Pedrillo, his servant, Belmonte has gained access to the grounds of the palace. His object is to rescue his betrothed, Costanze, but he has no very clear idea as to how to set about it. The arrival of Osmin the gardener causes him hastily to 'take cover.' Osmin proceeds to mount a ladder and gather figs, singing at the same time of the waywardness of womankind in general and Blonde —whom he is wooing—in particular. Belmonte emerges, and after a brisk duet between him and the surly gardener, is driven off the stage. Pedrillo then appears, and clamours loudly for

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Boosey and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

figs, only to be met with a storm of comic invective from Osmin. A chorus of janissaries and ladies of the harem enters, to welcome the arrival of a state barge bearing Pasha Selim and his fair captive. The Pasha is much concerned at Costanze's melancholy looks. Will she never relent? Will she never smile upon him? In an elaborate solo Costanze declares her unalterable love for Belmonte. The Pasha is touched by such fidelity; he will be patient a little longer.

Pedrillo now persuades the Pasha to take Belmonte into his service as an architect. The Act closes with a lively trio between Belmonte, Pedrillo, and Osmin.

ACT II

Same Scene. The second Act begins with a rattling duet between Osmin and Blonde. When the gardener, thoroughly discomfited, has taken his departure, Pedrillo enters, and tells Blonde that Belmonte has planned their escape from the palace for that very night. Meanwhile the Pasha has informed Costanze that his patience will soon be exhausted, thereby calling forth another difficult and pyrotechnic song from her. Pedrillo plies Osmin with wine, thus putting him effectively out of action. Belmonte, Costanze, Pedrillo, and Blonde sing a joyful quartette as the curtain falls.

ACT III

Same Scene. Midnight approaches. Belmonte invokes the aid of the god of love. The god is unresponsive. Osmin and the janissaries are on guard, and at the critical moment they pounce upon the fugitives and bind them fast, pending the arrival of the Pasha. Osmin exults ferociously. Belmonte and Costanze, convinced that they will shortly die together, express their feelings in a long duet. The Pasha, however, is a most magnanimous fellow. In spite of his admiration for the lady, in spite of the fact that Belmonte's father once did him a grave wrong, he grants them and their dependants a free pardon and a safe passage to their native land. As they depart rejoicing, the surprised and indignant Osmin falls prone.

LA SOMNAMBULA

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Vincenzo Bellini Words by Romani. First produced at Milan, 1831.

SCENE : A village in an Italian canton of Switzerland.

PERIOD : The Early Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

COUNT RODOLFO [Baritone].
ELVINO, *a young farmer* [Tenor].
THE VILLAGE NOTARY.
ALESSIO, *a young peasant, betrothed to Lisa* [Basso].
AMINA, *the beauty of the village* [Soprano].
LISA, *the hostess of the tavern* [Soprano].
TERESA, *Amina's foster-mother* [Soprano].

Chorus of Villagers, Peasants, etc.

ARGUMENT

This ingenuous and sentimental opera delighted England and France in the prim middle decades of the nineteenth century. Though the choruses are weak, many of the separate numbers have a peculiar grace and sweetness, and deserve a better fate than to be forgotten. "Amina" was one of the favourite rôles of Jenny Lind, the "Swedish nightingale."

ACT I

The Outskirts of the Village, showing the tavern where Lisa reigns, and an old water-mill, with a dilapidated wooden bridge. The villagers are rejoicing over the imminent wedding of Elvino and Amina. The only person who does not sympathize with this amiable joy is Lisa, who, in a song, makes it clear that Elvino was once an admirer of *hers*, and that she liked him better than she does her present swain, Alessio. Amina and her foster-mother, Teresa, now approach from the direction of the mill. The Notary arrives to draw up the marriage contract. Elvino comes, and gives Amina the betrothal ring, which she

slips on to her finger, and a posy of flowers, which she fastens into her dress. A sudden stir and excitement announce the arrival of Rodolfo, the long-absent lord of the domain. Dusk is falling. The neighbourhood is reputed to be haunted by a white-clad phantom. So, instead of continuing his journey, the Count decides to spend the night at the village inn. Before he withdraws, he manifests his admiration for Amina with sufficient emphasis to arouse the jealousy of Elvino.

ACT II

The Principal Bedroom in the Inn. A full moon shines through the open window. Lisa, the hostess, enters to wish her distinguished guest good-night, and seems quite willing to linger a little while, when a sudden noise makes her hastily conceal herself. A white-clad form appears at the window, and glides softly into the room. It is Amina, walking in her sleep—and singing also. From her fragments of song it is clear that she is dreaming of her approaching wedding, and thinks she is walking up the aisle with Elvino at her side. Then she lies down upon the bed and lapses again into the most profound slumber. Lisa now creeps away, forgetting her handkerchief, and leaving the Count alone with Amina. Rodolfo's heart, however, is touched by the sight of that unconscious and innocent slumber, and he respectfully withdraws. Meanwhile Lisa has summoned Elvino, Teresa, and a crowd of villagers, who rush into the room, and find Amina still reposing on the bed. When she wakes, bewildered, and protests her innocence, nobody believes her. Elvino casts her off in scorn, and she falls fainting into her mother's arms.

ACT III

Scene 1. On the Road to Rodolfo's Castle. A body of remorseful villagers, bound for the Castle, are going to plead Amina's cause with the Count, and to ask him to bring about a reconciliation between the estranged lovers. Elvino then comes in, and pours forth his sorrows in song. But when Amina and Teresa enter, and Amina appeals to him for mercy, he snatches the betrothal ring from her finger, and she faints in Teresa's arms. These recurrent faints ' date ' the opera as much as anything.

Scene 2. Outside the Water-mill, with its heavy wheel, its swift torrent, and its rickety old bridge. Broken-hearted, Elvino has drifted back to Lisa, his old love. They are on their way to the church to be married, when suddenly Count Rodolfo appears and commands them to pause. Then he rebukes Elvino vigorously for his lack of faith in Amina. She was true to him in thought and in deed. He explains the phenomenon of somnambulism to them. Somnambulists, he declares, do all sorts of things in their sleep which they forget entirely in their waking hours. And such is Amina! Elvino is rather sceptical at first, but an ocular demonstration soon converts him. Amina emerges from the mill, robed in white, a lamp in her hand, and proceeds to cross the crumbling bridge. Her wide-open, empty eyes, her slow, rhythmic movements, show that she is in a trance. A plank falls from the bridge beneath her feet, the lamp drops from her hand, and still she advances, until she stands among the touched and astonished group in the foreground. The words of the song which she is singing pierce the heart of Elvino. She sings of him, and of her love and grief. She looks in vain for his ring upon her finger. She takes from her dress the posy he gave her; alas! it is withered, and no tears of hers will make it live again. The Count has warned the bystanders that they must not break her trance, but Elvino's feelings are now too much for him. Lisa's treachery has been revealed—traitors should really take care not to leave recognizable handkerchiefs lying about—and, in a burst of remorse, he steps forward and gently replaces the betrothal ring upon Amina's finger. The delighted villagers cannot refrain from breaking forth into the chorus of *Viva Amina!* with which the opera began. And the heroine wakes to find the hero kneeling at her feet.

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

[*Les Contes d'Hoffmann.*] *Fantastic Opera in a Prologue, Three Acts, and an Epilogue. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Book by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, after three tales by E. T. A. Hoffmann. First produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, February* 10, 1881.

SCENE : Various parts of Europe.

TIME : The Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

HOFFMANN, *a poet* [Tenor].

OLYMPIA, GIULIETTA, ANTONIA, STELLA — *his sweethearts.* Four successive parts usually taken by one person [Soprano].

LINDORF, COPPELIUS, DAPERTUTTO, DR MIRAKEL — *his evil genius.* Part taken by one person [Baritone].

NICKLAUS, *friend of Hoffmann* [Tenor].
SPALANZANI, *an Italian savant* [Basso].
KRESPEL, *father of Antonia* [Basso].
SCHLEMIL, *admirer of Giulietta* [Baritone].
ANDREAS, *servant of Stella* [Tenor].
LUTHER, *an innkeeper* [Baritone].

Several small singing parts, such as Students, Servants, Messengers, Friends, etc.

ARGUMENT

" The Tales of Hoffmann " were derived from the fantastic and mystical tales written by the German author, E. T. A. Hoffmann, which attained a wide popularity in France. The opera is really a musical medley uniting several different episodes.[1]

PROLOGUE

Luther's Wine Tavern at Nuremburg. The poet Hoffmann, who has travelled widely and had many adventures, is now

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs J. B. Cramer and Co., Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

seeking his latest flame, Stella, who is singing in a theatre near by. His rival, Lindorf (who is really the evil genius of the poet), plans to get Hoffmann tipsy and unpresentable and then bring Stella on the scene. With Hoffmann are a group of his student friends who ask him to relate his adventures. He at first refuses, but as he begins to drink, his memory is unlocked and he tells the stories of three love affairs. The three succeeding acts each reveal one of these tales.

ACT I

The Home of Spalanzani. An Italian savant, Spalanzani, is reputed to have a remarkable daughter, Olympia, who dances and sings divinely. Hoffmann and his friend, Nicklaus, attend the large coming-out party. Coppelius, a trickster (the evil genius who thwarts the poet in each adventure), sells Hoffmann a pair of eyeglasses for the occasion, and through these the young poet sees a vision of surpassing beauty. Olympia sings to the delighted throng, and among others straight to Hoffmann's heart. He declares his passion to her at the first opportunity, and she responds although in monosyllables. She dances, however, better than she talks, and accepts Hoffmann as a partner. They dance faster and faster until he can no longer keep up with her flying feet and falls exhausted. She flits from the room and a crashing noise is heard. Coppelius returns with a wrecked female figure ; it is Olympia, who was only an automaton ! The figure had been constructed by the savant, aided by Coppelius, who now claims that Spalanzani deceived him as to payment. They quarrel while Hoffmann mourns his lost love.

ACT II

Giulietta's House in Venice. Hoffmann's next passion is for a beautiful Venetian courtesan, and he goes to pay her court although his friend tries to dissuade him. But Hoffmann's love blinds him to any defects in her morals. He finds her surrounded by a gay set, her favoured admirer being Schlemil, who treats Hoffmann disdainfully. Both Schlemil and the woman are in the power of Dapertutto (the evil genius under another name). Through Giulietta the evil one has become

possessed of Schlemil's shadow (in other words, his soul) and he plans to obtain Hoffmann's by means of his reflection. The poet falls a victim to her wiles and is promised the key to her room if he will challenge Schlemil, who now possesses it. He meets Schlemil and they fight. The latter falls. Hoffmann is horrified when he takes up a mirror and sees that it gives back no reflection. Half suspicious, he hastens to the balcony and sees Giulietta's gondola gliding away and the coquette laughing in the embraces of another man.

ACT III

The Home of Krespel. The next love of Hoffmann's is a pure one, its object being the lovely but delicate daughter of Krespel. Her mother, who has been a famous singer, has died prematurely from consumption, and the young girl inherits both the talent and the physical weakness. For this reason her father does not wish her to sing ; but Dr Mirakel (again the evil genius), who has treated her mother, secretly plans to hasten the daughter's demise. Hoffmann knows nothing of her disability and urges her to sing. She refuses. Then Dr Mirakel conjures up a vision of her dead mother, who also seems to join in the request. Antonia yields and sings divinely, urged on by Mirakel, but the effort has been too great and she falls from weakness into her lover's arms, where she expires.

EPILOGUE

The Tavern, as in Prologue. The tales are ended and Hoffmann's friends have departed one by one leaving him alone with his bottle. His head sinks forward upon his arms as he falls asleep. In his dreams the Muse of Poesy appears saying, " All your earthly loves have forsaken you ; henceforth follow me." As he sleeps, the door softly opens and Stella, his last love, enters upon the arm of Lindorf. The latter, the triumphant evil genius, points to the poet scornfully and leads Stella away.

TANNHÄUSER

Dramatic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at the Royal Opera, Dresden, October 19, 1845.

SCENE : Thuringia and the Wartburg.

TIME : The Thirteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

HERRMANN, *Landgrave of Thuringia* [Basso].
TANNHÄUSER, *a knight* [Tenor].
WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH, *his friend* [Baritone].
WALTER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, *a knight* [Tenor].
BITEROLF, *a knight* [Basso].
REIMAR VON ZWETER, *a knight* [Basso].
HEINRICH, *a scribe* [Tenor].
ELIZABETH, *niece of the Landgrave* [Soprano].
VENUS, *goddess of love* [Soprano].

Retainers, Lords, Ladies, Bacchantes, Shepherd, etc.

ARGUMENT

" Tannhäuser " deals with a legend of the Venusberg, a magic grotto in the mountains of Germany. Here the beautiful goddess of love holds court and beguiles any mortals who come her way. Tannhäuser, a Knight of Song, has fallen under her evil spell and dwelt several months with her in luxury and dissipation. But the remembrance of his former high station and the ties of earth still hold him, and when the scene opens he desires to return to the light of day.

ACT I

Scene 1. The Grotto Venus. Tannhäuser is growing weary of the blandishments of Venus and of the elaborate pageants which she prepares to entertain him. He pleads with her to allow him to return to the world of men and women, but his request only makes her the more jealous of her waning power.

She shows him new spectacles of beauty and luxury, but he only insists the more. Seeing that she cannot hold him an unwilling prisoner, she exacts from him a promise that he will sing her praises only, as against the merits of any mortal love. He gives this pledge as a means of escape, and the grotto and its occupants vanish from sight.

Scene 2. The Valley of Wartburg. Tannhäuser finds himself alone in the mountains of the Wartburg. In the distance a shepherd lad plays upon his pipe. By a mountain path stands a rude wayside cross, and presently a throng of pilgrims is heard singing as they go on their mission. After they have passed by, the Landgrave of the country and some of his nobles, among them Tannhäuser's loyal friend, Wolfram von Eschenbach, enter upon a hunting expedition. They recognize Tannhäuser and ply him with questions regarding his long disappearance. He evades their questions. Wolfram urges him to return to court, saying that Elizabeth, the Landgrave's niece, has long held his memory dear. The erring knight is filled with shame at the thought of this pure love which he has cast aside, and promises to return with his friends.

ACT II

Hall of Wartburg Castle. All is preparation for another great tourney of song, in which the best singers of the realm are to contest. The art of Tannhäuser is well known and it is believed that he will be an easy victor. Before the assembling of the guests, Elizabeth enters to see that all is in readiness, and here Tannhäuser finds her and learns that she has continued to love him faithfully. He obtains her forgiveness and retires to don his minstrel robes. The ladies and lords assemble, being greeted in stately fashion by the Landgrave and his niece. Last of all enter the minstrel knights. Wolfram sings of a love ennobling and spiritual as the highest type of bliss. Tannhäuser remembers his unlucky promise to Venus and answers him in scorn, saying that such love is paltry compared with other delights which he might perchance reveal. Being pressed for an explanation by other angered knights, he launches into a wild song in praise of Venus. The court is horrified. The ladies leave in haste and the knights press around the daring minstrel with drawn swords ready to slay him. Elizabeth

throws herself before him and pleads for the unhappy man's life. They finally allow him to go unscathed on condition that he joins the pilgrims, who now pass by on their journey to Rome, and there obtains the forgiveness of the Pope. The repentant Tannhäuser sets forth.

ACT III

The Valley of Wartburg. Several months have passed by without news of Tannhäuser. Both Elizabeth and Wolfram await him. Wolfram's friendship is unselfish as he himself has long loved the maiden who pines over the wanderer's departure. The pilgrims return from Rome, and she comes to the wayside cross to look for him among them. But he does not appear, and broken-hearted she returns to the castle and soon breathes her last. Wolfram enters, comparing her pure bright spirit to the evening star which shines upon him. A haggard stranger now appears, who proves to be Tannhäuser returning without the Pope's forgiveness. The latter refuses to pardon him until his pilgrim's staff blossoms. Tannhäuser is ready to return to the haunts of Venus, and she now appears and beckons him. But Wolfram pleads with him and prevails upon him to deny her. He does so, and the vision vanishes. A procession enters bearing the dead body of Elizabeth, and while Tannhäuser kneels beside it, his troubled spirit is also released. At this moment messengers come from the Pope, bearing the pilgrim's staff. A miracle has happened. The staff has put forth leaves and blossoms.

THÄIS

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Jules Massenet. Book by Louis Gallet, after the romance of Anatole France. First produced at the Grand Opera, Paris, March 16, 1894.

SCENE : Upper Egypt.

TIME : Early Christian Era.

CHARACTERS

ATHANAEL, *a monk* [Baritone].
THÄIS, *a courtesan* [Soprano].
NICIAS, *a wealthy Alexandrian* [Tenor].
PALEMON, *the head monk* [Basso].
ALBINE, *an abbess* [Mezzo-Soprano].
LA CHARMEUSE, *a dancer.*
CROBYLE, *a slave* [Soprano].
MYRTALE, *a slave* [Soprano].

Monks, Nuns, Citizens, Servants, Dancers, etc.

ARGUMENT

The theme of " Thäis " is the struggle between the lower nature and the higher ; it personifies the eternal conflict between the beast and the angel in the human race.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. The Theban Desert. Surrounded by luxury and sin, a small band of Cenobite monks dwells in the desert near Thebes. Athanael, a young enthusiast of the Order, has just returned from a mission to Alexandria, and he gives a gloomy account of the vice rampant in that city. It is under the control of a beautiful courtesan named Thäis, who rules by the power of her charms. Athanael cannot get the vision of her loveliness out of his head, and he thinks it would be a great victory for the Church if he could convert her. Palemon, the head of the Order, rebukes the idea as foolish, but in his dreams Athanael sees again the lovely woman posing before the populace as

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Heugel, Paris, for permission to use their text of the opera.

Aphrodite, and being acclaimed as a goddess. He awakes, saying that he must return on this mission, although Palemon and the other monks endeavour to dissuade him.

Scene 2. The House of Nicias, at Alexandria. Nicias, a wealthy leader of fashion, is just now the favoured admirer of Thäis, although he ruefully admits he is paying extravagantly for the distinction. To his house Athanael directs his steps, and finally gains admittance there. When he unfolds his plan to Nicias, the latter laughs at it, but good-naturedly promises to aid him. Thäis is to be present at supper that very evening, and the young monk must make a good appearance. The leader of fashion looks approvingly at Athanael's fine head and athletic figure, and bids his slave array the guest in rich attire. A great acclamation is heard, and Thäis enters amid a throng of her adorers. The young monk alone stands aloof and she notices his attitude. "Who is he?" she asks. "One who has come for you," Nicias replies jestingly. "Bringing love?" she asks simply; for to her love is all in all. "Yes, love that you know not of," answers Athanael sternly, coming forward; and he tries to tell her of the higher life. She cannot understand him. He reproaches her and the company interfere. Then Thäis, piqued, tries to subdue him by her charms. He retreats, but promises to come to her apartments and talk further. It is her challenge which he accepts, confident of his own integrity.

ACT II

Scene 1. Interior of the Palace of Thäis. In a luxuriously appointed room Thäis awaits the coming of one who she thinks will be her next victim. Meanwhile, she prays to Aphrodite for a continuance of youth and beauty, her only weapons. Athanael pauses at the door, at first spellbound by the vision of loveliness; then advancing, he tells her that the love which he offers is from God and is for her salvation. They argue, she trying upon him all her coquetry, but he is able to resist temptation. This new type of man impresses her even more than his message. The voice of Nicias is heard calling her, and Athanael departs, saying he will wait for her outside the palace. She must follow him if she would find the new and higher love.

Scene 2. Outside the Palace. Moonlight floods the open court, while through the lighted windows come the sounds of

revelry and feasting. Athanael lies upon the stone step. Presently the door opens and Thäis emerges bearing a lighted lamp. She tells him she has decided to leave all and follow him. "Then break your image and set fire to your belongings," he replies, "for you cannot take any of these things with you." She returns within and obeys him, reappearing in a simple garb, bearing a torch. Meanwhile, Nicias and his friends come forth and order dancers to entertain them. In the midst of the revelry Thäis appears, but they recognize her despite her rough dress, and try to detain her. Nicias diverts the crowd's attention by scattering handfuls of gold, and the two pilgrims depart while the palace burns.

ACT III

Scene 1. An Oasis in the Desert. Thäis is half-dead from the fatigue of this unaccustomed journey, but presses on without murmuring. She wishes to find the higher love. Athanael's heart is stirred by her sufferings and fortitude. He bids her rest beneath the shade of a clump of palms and brings water to bathe her feet, kissing them. His destination is a convent in the desert, now near at hand. The abbess and her nuns are heard singing as they approach. Athanael commends the new convert into their keeping and stands silent until they have gone. Then he utters a cry of anguish. He has conquered, but now he is alone.

Scene 2. The Cenobite Monastery. Athanael returns to the monastery, where the monks congratulate him upon his success. But he is indifferent to their praise. The vision of Thäis still haunts his dreams, and he finds that he is miserable since she has gone out of his life.

Scene 3. The Garden of the Convent. Thäis is dying, and has sent for Athanael. He comes and the abbess leads him to her cot in the open court. The sisters extol her saintly life, but the monk does not heed. He kneels by her side and begs her to come back to him. It is not the heavenly love which fills his heart now, but the earthly. She opens her eyes but does not understand him; for visions of heavenly bliss already possess her. Deaf to his entreaties, she calls upon the name of God and breathes her last, while he grovels upon the ground in despair.

TOSCA

Tragic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini. Book by Illica and Giacosa, after the drama by Sardou. First produced at the Costanzi Theatre, Rome, January 14, 1900.

SCENE : Rome.

TIME : *Circa* 1800.

CHARACTERS

MARIO CAVARADOSSI, *a painter* [Tenor].
BARON SCARPIA, *Chief of Police* [Baritone].
CESARE ANGELOTTI, *an escaped prisoner* [Basso].
FLORIA TOSCA, *a singer* [Soprano].
SPOLETTA, *a police officer* [Tenor].

Churchmen, Police, Jailer, Shepherd, Boy Servants.

ARGUMENT

" Tosca," founded upon Sardou's tragedy, is an intense plot of passion and revenge, unrelieved by any lighter themes. Its music, brilliant and sombre, closely fits the text.[1]

ACT I

Interior of the Church of Sant'Andrea, Rome. The painter, Mario Cavaradossi, is busily engaged upon mural decorations within the church when he is appealed to for aid by Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner. The painter promises to assist him to escape, and meanwhile hides him in the church. Tosca, a singer, and the painter's sweetheart, comes in at this moment and believes that she has discovered evidences of the painter's fickleness, especially since he has been using another woman as the model for his " Magdalen." He reassures her. The sacristan and choir-boys enter, and, later, Scarpia, the Chief of Police, in search of the fugitive. He finds a fan dropped

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

by the model and shows it to Tosca in order to excite her jealousy. He wishes her to betray her lover, and he is also in love with her on his own account.

ACT II

Scarpia's Offices in the Farnese Palace. Scarpia's men have not been able to catch Angelotti, but still suspecting Cavaradossi they bring him before their chief. Scarpia questions him sharply without being able to obtain any information and then remands him to the torture-chamber. He has sent for Tosca, who now appears. At first she is silent to all his questions, but when he tells her that her lover is being tortured, and proves this by opening the door to the inquisition chamber, she cannot withstand the strain and reveals Angelotti's hiding-place. The painter reproaches her for the betrayal as he is taken away to prison. Scarpia now tells her that her lover will be condemned to death unless she is willing to make a sacrifice to save him—the sacrifice of her honour. He, Scarpia, loves her, and under no other condition can the painter be saved. Tosca recoils from this proposition, but when word is brought that Angelotti has poisoned himself to avoid recapture she fears Cavaradossi will do likewise and says she will consent. The police officer draws up a passport for the prisoner and at the same time gives orders for his execution by a volley of musketry. He carefully explains that it will be a mock execution, only blank cartridges being used, for the sake of appearances. He advances to Tosca with the passport and endeavours to embrace her. She seizes it and quickly stabs him to the heart. Then piously composing the body, with lights at the head and feet and a crucifix on its breast, she hastens away to the prison.

ACT III

Battlements of the Prison. The squad of soldiers prepare to obey the order which they have just received for the execution of Cavaradossi. He is led out to an open court overlooking the battlements, and is there overjoyed to find Tosca, who tells him of the passport which she carries. The execution will only be pretended, she tells him, but he must fall as though slain. The file of soldiers now take their position and fire their volley.

The prisoner sinks in a crumpled heap, but when Tosca rushes to his side she finds that he is really dead—pierced by actual bullets. Tosca cannot at first realize the horrible truth, then gives way to despair. The guards now rush in to seize her for the murder of Scarpia. She evades them, springs to the battlements, and throws herself headlong down to her death.

LA TRAVIATA

[*The Castaway.*] *Lyric Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book based upon "La Dame aux Camélias" (Camille) by Alexandre Dumas, the younger. First produced at the Teatro Fenice, Venice, March* 6, 1853.

SCENE : Paris.

TIME : 1700.

CHARACTERS

VIOLETTA VALERY, *a frivolous woman* [Soprano].
FLORA BELOIX, *of her set* [Soprano].
ANNINA, *a servant* [Contralto].
ALFRED GERMONT, *a young Parisian* [Tenor].
GERMONT SENIOR, *his father* [Baritone].
GASTON DE LETORIÈRES, *a Parisian* [Tenor].
BARON DOUPHAL, *a Parisian* [Baritone].
MARQUIS D'ORBIGNY, *a Parisian* [Baritone].
DR GRENVIL, *a physician* [Basso].
JOSEPH, *a servant* [Baritone].

Members of the gay set, Servants, etc.

ARGUMENT

"La Traviata" follows closely the story of "Camille" ("La Dame aux Camélias") which tells of the awakening of a pure love in an abandoned woman's heart. Dumas's story is a picture of Parisian life on the eve of the Second Empire ; but the Italian libretto harks back to the days of Louis XIV.

ACT I

Banquet Room in Violetta's Paris Mansion. Violetta Valery, one of the most beautiful and noted of the Parisian demi-monde, gives a supper party to some of her set. Her latest conquest, Alfred Germont, is present, and finds himself taking a strange interest in this talented but dissolute woman. He questions her about her past life, while the guests make merry revel in this and an adjoining ballroom. The woman who has dallied

with love all her life finds her better nature awakened by his interest and sympathy, and agrees to leave her folly and devote herself to him alone.

ACT II

A Villa near Paris. True to her word, Violetta retires from Paris and lives quietly but happily with Alfred in a little country place. Their money is spent freely and carelessly, and from time to time Annina, Violetta's maid, goes to Paris, whence she returns with fresh funds. Alfred finally learns from the girl that she has been disposing of all her mistress' property piecemeal in order to run this establishment. For the first time Alfred realizes his true position and rushes off to the city to raise funds by his own efforts. While he is gone his father, who has just discovered this retreat, arrives to upbraid Violetta for leading on his son in a spendthrift and dissolute life. She smiles scornfully at this charge, but when Germont goes on to say that it is wrecking the young man's chances and also preventing the marriage of his sister, she begins to realize that perhaps she is standing in his way. She finds that the noblest love is unselfish and self-sacrificing, and she proves that this is the quality of her love for Alfred by promising to give him up. Penning a hasty note of farewell she returns to her old life in the city. When Alfred returns he pays no heed to the note or to his father's explanations, but hastens back to the city with rage and grief in his heart.

ACT III

Flora's Apartments. Another scene of revelry is at its height in the mansion of one of Violetta's friends, and Violetta herself enters upon the arm of Baron Douphal. Here Alfred finds her. He begins gambling recklessly and soon wins heavy stakes from the Baron. Alfred then upbraids Violetta for leaving him and implores her to return. She refuses, though giving no explanation of her apparent faithlessness, and Alfred in anger hurls his winnings at her feet, calling them all to witness that he has paid her in full. The Baron interposes and the two quarrel and challenge each other. Alfred's father now arrives and, chiding his son for his conduct, leads him away.

ACT IV

Violetta's Bedchamber. Violetta has long suffered from throat trouble and now sinks rapidly. She pines for Alfred but will not send for him. She learns through a letter from his father that Alfred and the Baron have fought a duel and the latter is wounded. Presently Annina brings the joyful tidings that Alfred is coming to visit her. He has learned of her sacrifice. The two meet and are reconciled, promising never to part again. But death has already laid its hold on Violetta. She grows weaker. The doctor returns with Germont the elder, who also realizes her true spirit. The little group stand sorrowfully by her bedside as she breathes her last.

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Tragic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Richard Wagner. Book by the Composer. First produced at Munich, June 10, 1865.

SCENE : Cornwall, Brittany, and the Sea.

TIME : Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

MARK, *King of Cornwall* [Basso].
ISOLDE, *his Queen* [Soprano].
TRISTAN, *a knight* [Tenor].
KURVENAL, *his servant* [Baritone].
MELOT, *a knight* [Baritone].
BRÄNGANE, *Isolde's servant* [Contralto].
STEERSMAN [Tenor].
SHEPHERD [Tenor].

Courtiers, Knights, Servants.

ARGUMENT

The story of " Tristan and Isolde " is adapted from a romance by Gottfried of Strasburg, telling of the conflict between love and duty in the hearts of two lovers of mediæval days.

ACT I

On Shipboard. Tristan, a valiant knight, has been involved in many adventures. In Ireland he has met the beautiful Princess Isolde, and incurred her enmity by killing Morold, an unworthy knight, who was her betrothed. Tristan also was wounded, and the maiden's heart softened towards him as she nursed him back to life. He afterwards gives so glowing an account of her charms that his royal master, King Mark of Cornwall, desires her for his wife ; and Tristan is sent to conduct her to Cornwall. The Princess comes most unwillingly, as she secretly prefers Tristan, but his lips are sealed on account of his mission. On shipboard he treats her with the most scrupulous courtesy, but will not allow himself to come under her influence. She sends her attendant, Brängane, to summon

him, but he makes excuses. Angered, Isolde orders Brängane to brew a deadly poison for Tristan, and when he finally appears in answer to her repeated requests, she asks him to drink a toast. Tristan neither knows nor cares as to the nature of the drink, but takes it without protest. She purposes to drink also and thus perish with him. But Brängane has brewed a love potion instead, and the two, after drinking, look into each other's eyes with their mutual passions increased tenfold.

ACT II

The Castle of King Mark. Tristan despairingly completes his mission and conducts Isolde to the King. But the two lovers plan a last meeting, and Melot, who has pretended to be Tristan's friend, arranges a hunting expedition, in order to draw the King and his retainers from the castle. It is night, and Tristan is summoned by a torch in Isolde's window. Brängane keeps watch from the tower. In the midst of their bliss, the lovers are warned by her that the King is returning; and Kurvenal, Tristan's servant, also rushes in, bidding him flee. But it is too late. Melot has betrayed his friend, and King Mark confronts the guilty pair in dignified surprise. Tristan is overwhelmed with shame, but when Melot makes a sneering remark, he draws his sword. The two fight and Tristan falls wounded.

ACT III

Scene 1. A Castle Ruin in Brittany. The wounded knight is suffered to depart by the generous King, and is conveyed by Kurvenal to a deserted castle on the coast of Brittany. But his anguish of soul and desire for Isolde prevent his wound from healing. In despair, Kurvenal sends to Isolde, who is also skilled in drugs. She answers that she will come in person, and the sick man is buoyed up by this hope. At last her ship is sighted—it nears the shore—and she lands. With a final effort Tristan rises to meet her, only to sink down exhausted and die in her arms.

Scene 2. The same (usually omitted). King Mark and Melot follow Isolde. Kurvenal opposes their entrance and kills Melot, himself receiving a death-wound. The King learns from Brängane of the love potion and hopeless passion of the two lovers whom he has separated, and feels only remorse for their fate.

IL TROVATORE

[*The Troubadour.*] *Romantic Opera in Four Acts. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Book by Cammarano. First produced at the Teatro Apollo, Rome, January* 19, 1853.

SCENE : Biscay and Aragon.

TIME : The Fifteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

COUNT DI LUNA [Baritone].
COUNTESS LEONORA [Soprano].
AZUCENA, *a gipsy* [Contralto].
MANRICO, *the Count's brother, a wandering troubadour* [Tenor].
FERRANDO, *servant of the Count* [Basso].
INEZ, *friend of Leonora* [Soprano].
RUIZ, *a gipsy* [Tenor].

Gipsies, Gentlemen, Ladies, Servants.

ARGUMENT

"Il Trovatore" is the romantic tragedy of a high-born child kidnapped by gipsies—to this extent a parallel with "The Bohemian Girl." Its tragic dénouement, which seems forced, does not detract from the brilliant colour of its scenes or the pleasing quality of its music.

ACT I

Scene 1. The Count's Castle. Count di Luna, a powerful nobleman, has lost a younger brother at the hands of a gipsy band and has heard nothing concerning him for several years since that event. His retainers are told the story by Ferrando, who adds that the woman who stole the child was burned at the stake, but that her daughter is still alive.

Scene 2. Balcony of the Castle. Leonora, an heiress, has fallen in love with Manrico, a handsome troubadour, who appears nightly under her window singing serenades. While awaiting his appearance one evening, Count di Luna, also a suitor, arrives and she mistakes him for the minstrel. The surprise is

general a few moments later when Manrico appears. The two men quarrel and cross swords. Manrico is wounded, but escapes before the Count can summon his attendants.

ACT II

Scene 1. A Gipsy Camp. Manrico is being nursed back to health by Azucena, his supposed mother. She confesses to him that she is not his real mother, but refuses to tell anything more. Ruiz, Manrico's follower, brings word that Leonora, believing him dead, is about to take the veil in order to escape from the Count, and that the latter is pursuing her with his soldiers. Manrico dons his armour and despite his weakened condition hurries to the rescue.

Scene 2. A Convent. It is the day when Leonora is to take the veil. Di Luna is encamped without to prevent her from doing so. The nuns march slowly by singing, with Leonora among them. Di Luna attempts to abduct her, but is in turn surprised by Manrico and his band, who now rush in. The Count's forces are outnumbered and he is compelled to withdraw. Leonora is overjoyed to find her lover alive and renounces the veil in his favour.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Camp of Di Luna. The Count has captured the gipsy, Azucena, and is overjoyed to learn that she is his rival's reputed mother. Ferrando charges her with having murdered the Count's brother. She denies it stoutly, but will say nothing more, and the Count orders her to the torture-chamber.

Scene 2. The Convent. Preparations are toward for the marriage of Leonora and Manrico, but before the ceremony occurs Ruiz enters with the tidings that Azucena is in the Count's power and about to be tortured. Manrico is loyal to his foster-mother and at once sets forth to rescue her, bidding his tearful prospective bride a hasty farewell.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Outside the Prison Tower. This time the Count's men are too strong for Manrico and he is overpowered and

made prisoner. The Count condemns him to death as an outlaw and he is shut within the fatal tower. Leonora, on the outside, hears the mournful strains of the *Miserere* or death-chant. She pleads with the Count, who now enters, to spare the life of her lover, and finally in desperation offers herself to him for this boon. The Count agrees to sign a reprieve on these terms, and Leonora furtively drinks poison to avoid becoming his victim.

Scene 2. Within the Prison. Azucena, worn and exhausted, lies upon a pallet in troubled sleep. Manrico watches over her, awaiting his own summons to the block. The door opens and Leonora, wide-eyed and panting, rushes in to bid him save himself. He at once suspects the truth, that she has sold herself for him, but sees the whole of her sacrifice as she falls dying from the effects of the poison. The Count arrives to find his triumph short-lived, and in a rage orders Manrico at once to execution, forcing Azucena to witness the death. His exultation is changed to horror when she tells him that he has slain his own brother.

TURANDOT

Lyrical drama in Three Acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini, the last Act completed after his death by F. Alfano. Book by G. Adami and R. Simoni. First produced at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, April 1926 *; Covent Garden, June* 7, 1927.

SCENE : Pekin.

TIME : Legendary Antiquity.

CHARACTERS

THE EMPEROR ALTOUM [Tenor].
TIMUR, *exiled King of Tartary* [Basso].
CALAF, THE UNKNOWN PRINCE, *his son* [Tenor].
PING, *Lord High Chancellor* [Baritone].
PONG, *Lord High Stewart* [Tenor].
PUNG, *Lord High Cook* [Tenor].
A MANDARIN [Baritone].
THE PRINCE OF PERSIA.
THE EXECUTIONER.
TURANDOT, *Princess of China* [Soprano].
LIÙ, *a slave girl* [Soprano].

Citizens of Pekin, Courtiers, Ladies in Waiting, Attendants of the Executioner, Phantoms, Imperial Guards, etc.

ARGUMENT

Puccini was engaged upon this Chinese opera at the time of his death, and it has been regretted that he should not have lived to complete a last act so rich in opportunity for his particular genius. In "Madam Butterfly" he had already shown how congenial he found the Far East as a source of colour and atmosphere. "Turandot" has a more definitely Oriental character, and is relieved by touches of vivid comedy.[1]

ACT I

An open Space outside the Royal Palace in Pekin. To the right, in a square arch, hangs an enormous bronze gong. A

[1] By arrangement with G. Ricordi and Co., the owners of the copyright.

many-coloured crowd has gathered to listen to the Mandarin, who is reading aloud a solemn proclamation. The hand of the Princess Turandot will be given to any competitor of royal birth who guesses correctly three riddles propounded by her; all unsuccessful competitors will be beheaded. The young Prince of Persia has tried and failed; therefore at moonrise he must die. The crowd receives this news with acclamation. In the tumult which follows an aged beggar is jostled and pushed about, and the slave-girl who is with him begs the bystanders to have mercy on his old age and infirmity. The Unknown Prince rushes forward and recognizes in the beggar his own father, the exiled and outcast King Timur of Tartary. Each had thought the other dead. They embrace with many tears. The moon rises, the Executioner and his assistants enter, and the young Prince of Persia is brought in. At the sight of his youthful face and courageous bearing the mood of the mob changes, and they cry aloud to the Princess to have mercy. The Unknown Prince calls down curses on the cruel Turandot, who condemns this boy to death. Then Turandot herself appears. All bow down before her, except the Prince of Persia, the Unknown Prince, and the Executioner. She makes a stern gesture, and the doomful procession goes on its way again. The Unknown Prince is overwhelmed by the beauty of Turandot. He pours forth his love, to the dismay of his father, and of Liù, the faithful slave-girl. He is determined to try his luck, and to strike the three strokes on the gong which shall be a signal that another competitor has arrived. The three comic Courtiers, Ping, Pong, and Pung, endeavour to dissuade him. He sees in a vision the men who have died for love of Turandot. He sees the Executioner bearing the severed head of the young Prince of Persia. But he is obdurate. He strikes three blows on the gong.

ACT II

Scene 1. A gorgeously painted pavilion. This Scene is entirely occupied by the caperings, antics, philosophizings, and disputations of the three comic Courtiers.

Scene 2. Outside the palace. A great marble staircase surmounted by a triumphal arch in the centre. The crowd gradually

fills the square. A procession of Mandarins enters, followed by eight Wise Elders, each bearing in his hand three sealed scrolls of silk, containing the answers to the Princess's riddles. The Emperor Altoum appears under the arch. The Unknown Prince stands at the foot of the staircase. Timur and Liù are among the onlookers. The Emperor explains that he is bound by a terrible oath. But enough blood has been shed. Let this young man depart! "Son of Heaven," returns the Prince, "I beg leave to stand the test." Turandot enters, in a robe of stiff and glittering gold. Gazing coldly at the Prince, she explains that in her there lives again the spirit of her sainted and martyred grandmother, the Princess Lou Ling. In the days when the seventh King of Tartary went forth to war, the Princess Lou Ling was carried off and slain by a stranger. She has lain long in her vast tomb, but her granddaughter has avenged her by bringing about the death of all the princes who have come from far lands to woo her. None of them shall claim her. Let the stranger-prince beware!

The Unknown does not blench. So Turandot proceeds to propound the three riddles: What is it that flies by night, that is born when the sun sets, and dies when he rises? "It is hope," returns the Prince. Disconcerted, Turandot goes on to the second: What is it that dreams can kindle into flame, whose voice we tremble to hear, and which is the colour of the setting sun? "It is blood," says the Prince. Again he has guessed aright. Turandot, alarmed, proceeds to Number Three: What is it that while it freezes sets you on fire, which by setting you free makes you a slave, and by taking you as a slave makes you a king? "It is Turandot!" cries the Prince. The crowd acclaims his victory, but the Princess is appalled. She appeals to her father, but he replies that his oath is inviolable. Then the Prince advances. She asked him three riddles. He will ask her one. If she can answer it before the sun rises, he is willing to die at dawn. What is his name? Turandot hangs her head, overwhelmed. The crowd salutes the Son of Heaven.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Gardens of the Palace. It is night. The Unknown Prince stands like a man in a dream. His hopes and

ardours find utterance in a song which is really one of the finest in the whole opera. Ping, Pong, and Pung then enter. They bring with them a group of beautiful, semi-nude girls, and many caskets overflowing with jewels. All these shall be his, if only he will go away! If he *won't*—well, he'll have a taste of Chinese torture that will astonish him. The Prince is unmoved. Though the heavens should fall, he must have Turandot! There is a tumult outside, and a company of Imperial guards rushes in, dragging Timur and Liù. These people were seen speaking to the Prince yesterday. *They* must know his name! The three courtiers summon the Princess. She questions Timur, but Liù steps quickly forward and declares that to her only is the secret known. The Prince declares, on his part, that Liù knows nothing. The guards seize her, and she begs them to gag her before they begin to scourge her, so that she may utter neither word nor cry. After a time, Turandot questions the slave-girl. What force is it that upholds her? "It is love," says Liù simply. The executioner arrives, and at the sight of him Liù's courage seems to falter. She *will* speak, at last. Addressing herself to Turandot, she predicts that she also will know what love is some day. Then she stabs herself to death with a dagger snatched from the girdle of one of the guards. The body of the slave-girl is borne reverently away, Timur walking beside it, holding the lifeless hand. The Prince is left alone with Turandot, who is closely veiled. With bitter words of reproach, he tears off her veil. She cries that it is sacrilege for him to touch her. He takes her fiercely in his arms and kisses her on the mouth. For a moment she is tamed, and lies quivering in his embrace, confessing that of all her wooers he was the only one she had feared, and that therefore she had both loved and hated him. Then suddenly she remembers that he has not told her his name. He tells her, and by telling her, as he himself says, he puts his life in her hands. The supreme hour has come. The sun has risen.

Scene 2. The Exterior of the Palace. The Emperor is enthroned, surrounded by his court, his wise men, and his guards. A respectful crowd is ranged on each side. The three comic courtiers spread a golden carpet on the central staircase as Turandot ascends. Looking down steadily at the Unknown Prince, who stands at the foot, she says to

the Emperor: "August father, I know the name of the stranger now. It is Love!" At these words, Calaf leaps up the steps and takes her into his arms. The crowd acclaims them joyfully, and scatters flowers. General rejoicing as the curtain falls.

WILLIAM TELL

Romantic Opera in Three Acts. Music by Gioacchino A. Rossini. Book by Hippolyte Bis and Étienne Jouy, after the drama by Schiller. First produced at the Académie, Paris, August 3, 1829.

SCENE : Switzerland.

TIME : The Thirteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

GESSLER, *a tyrant* [Basso].
RUDOLF DE HARRAS, *his lieutenant* [Tenor].
WILLIAM TELL, *a patriot* [Baritone].
WALTER FÜRST, *a patriot* [Baritone].
MELCHTHAL, *a patriot* [Basso].
ARNOLD, *his son* [Tenor].
LEUTHOLD, *a patriot* [Tenor].
MATHILDE, *daughter of Gessler* [Soprano].
HEDWIG, *wife of Tell* [Mezzo-Soprano].
JEMMY, *son of Tell* [Soprano].
RUODI, *a fisherman* [Tenor].

Peasants, Huntsmen, Soldiers.

ARGUMENT

The opera of " William Tell " is written around the historical, or legendary, story of the Swiss patriot who successfully stirred up his countrymen in the cause of freedom. The musical setting, especially the overture, is markedly brilliant.

ACT I

The Shore of Lake Lucerne, in front of Tell's House. William Tell, his wife, and little son are making merry on the shores of Lucerne when their aged countryman, Melchthal, and his son, Arnold, come to greet them. Arnold is torn between two desires : he wishes to aid Tell and the patriots against the tyrant Gessler, but he is also in love with the latter's daughter, Mathilde, whose life he has saved. Tell pleads with him to put his country first. Presently Leuthold, a villager, rushes in

imploring assistance. He has killed a soldier who tried to abduct his daughter, and he must flee across the lake to escape his enemies. The fisherman, Ruodi, does not dare venture in the face of an approaching storm, but Tell leaps into the boat with Leuthold and rows him across. The soldiers appear led by Rudolf and, in revenge, set fire to Tell's and other cottages and seize Melchthal as a hostage.

ACT II

Scene 1. A Forest. The horns of a party of huntsmen sound through the wood, and are answered by a chorus of shepherds. Arnold meets Mathilde and declares his passion for her and learns that she also loves him. But Tell and Fürst enter at this moment to inform Arnold that the soldiers have slain his father. The young man bids his sweetheart a sorrowful farewell and casts in his lot with his country.

Scene 2. The Open Country. Following the call of Tell, Fürst, Arnold, and other patriots, the villagers and shepherds assemble from the various cantons. All take the oath of allegiance to Switzerland and prepare to battle against the tyrant's forces.

ACT III

Scene 1. The Open Square at Altdorf. Gessler has erected a pole in the market-place at Altdorf and commanded that all shall bow before the cap, placed thereon, as a recognition of his authority. Tell refuses to do so and is seized by Rudolf. The tyrant has heard of Tell's skill with the cross-bow and will release him only on condition that he give an exhibition of this skill by shooting an apple off his son's head. Tell does so, but when questioned as to a second arrow which is in his possession, he states that it was intended for Gessler's heart had the first arrow harmed the lad. For this bold speech Tell is still held prisoner, although Mathilde intercedes for him.

Scene 2. The Shore of Lake Lucerne. Hedwig, Tell's wife, grieves for her husband and child who are both in the hands of the soldiers. Mathilde enters bringing the boy, whom she has aided to escape. The father also soon appears, having made good his own escape. He lies in wait for Gessler and kills him

with an arrow from his bow. The patriot army is victorious over the enemy, and Arnold enters at the head of the joyous patriots, and Mathilde now gladly gives herself to him. All unite in thanksgiving and a prayer that Switzerland may continue to be free.

THE WRECKERS

[*Les Naufrageurs.*] *Cornish Drama in Three Acts. Music by Ethel M. Smyth. Book by H. B. Brewster. First produced at the Stadt Theater, Leipzig*, 1906.

SCENE : A Village on the wildest part of the Cornish Coast.

TIME : The Eighteenth Century, in the early days of the Wesleyan Revival.

CHARACTERS

PASCOE, *headman of the village and local preacher* [Basso-Baritone].
LAWRENCE, *keeper of the lighthouse* [High Baritone].
TALLAN, *keeper of the tavern* [Tenor].
HARVEY, *brother-in-law to Lawrence* [Basso].
JACK, *son of Tallan* [Mezzo-Soprano].
MARK, *a young fisherman* [Tenor].
THIRZA, *wife of Pascoe* [Mezzo-Soprano].
AVIS, *daughter of Lawrence* [Soprano].

Fishermen, Miners, Shepherds, and their Womenfolk.

ARGUMENT

In the middle of the eighteenth century the remoter coast villages of Cornwall were almost untouched by civilizing influences. Though they embraced Wesley's teaching with fervour, they continued the horrible practice of wrecking and of slaying the unfortunate folk who escaped death by drowning, and regarded a vessel on the rocks as a special mark of divine favour.[1]

ACT I

Villagers enter singing a revival hymn. They cease singing to drink at the inn, and are upbraided by Pascoe, who tells them that their impiety is to blame for the fact that for months no wrecks have brought wealth to their shores. Lawrence and

[1] My thanks are due to Dame Ethel Smyth and to her publishers, Messrs J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., for permission to use their text of the opera.

Avis excite their fury by telling them of a beacon fire on the rocks which has warned vessels from their coast. Mark enters singing a ballad, and Avis reveals her love for him, but finds it is not returned, and when Thirza comes out of her cottage singing the same ballad, Avis realizes that she is her rival. Thirza refuses to join the chapel-goers, and tells Pascoe that she cannot pray for the destruction of vessels and the killing of innocent folk. Avis suspects Pascoe of lighting the warning beacon under the influence of his wife, and Lawrence, Harvey, Tallan, and Jack agree to watch that night for the traitor. A gun is heard, suggesting that a ship is in distress, and all rush down to the shore in wild excitement.

ACT II

A Desolate Part of the Cornish Coast at Night-time. Avis and Jack pass by, watching to see whose hand lights the warning beacon. When they have gone, Mark hurriedly builds a bonfire, and is about to light it when Thirza enters to warn him that watchers are near. A love-scene follows, and Thirza agrees to fly with him on the following day. She fires the beacon herself before they leave. Pascoe, finding the beacon and Thirza's cloak beside it, falls senseless, and is presently discovered by the watchers and seized.

ACT III

A Cavern with a Narrow Entrance to the Sea. The assembled villagers accuse Pascoe of lighting the beacon. Mark proclaims himself the offender, and Thirza says that it was done at her bidding. Avis seeks to save Mark by declaring that he spent the night with her, and for this, though Mark denies it, Lawrence curses her and casts her off. Mark and Thirza declare their mutual love and ask that they may be left to die together. Pascoe tries to save her, but is compelled at last to leave with the rest, as the waves begin to enter the cave. The gate of the aperture is shut to, and Mark and Thirza are left alone to await death.

THE BAT

[*Die Fledermaus.*] *Comic Operetta in Three Acts. Music by Johann Strauss, Junior. Book by C. Haffner and R. Genée after "Le Reveillon" by Meilhac and Halévy. First produced at Vienna*, 1874.

SCENE: A Watering-place near a large town in Central Europe.

TIME: The Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

BARON EISENSTEIN [Tenor].
ROSALINDE, *his wife* [Soprano].
ADÈLE, *her maid* [Soprano].
MOLLY (sometimes called IDA), *Adèle's sister, a ballet-dancer* [Soprano].
FRANK, *the governor of the prison* [Baritone].
ALFRED, *formerly singing-master to Rosalinde* [Tenor].
DR FALKE, *a notary* [Baritone].
DR BLIND, *an advocate* [Baritone].
PRINCE ORLOFSKY, *a millionaire* [Contralto].
FROSCH, *a gaoler* [Heavy comedy].

Ballet-girls, Dandies, Revellers, etc.

ARGUMENT

"Die Fledermaus" was the first of the series of light-hearted operettas with which the composer of "The Blue Danube" enchanted the capitals of Europe in the seventies and eighties of the last century. In its gay, complicated, inconsequent plot it bears clear evidence of the French origin of the 'book,' but the music is of the purest Viennese vintage, light, dry, and sparkling. The waltz which opens Act II is one of the most popular Strauss ever wrote.[1]

ACT I

A Room in Eisenstein's House. The curtain rises on an empty stage. Outside the voice of Alfred is audible, singing an impassioned love-song in which occurs the name of Rosalinde.

[1] My thanks are due to Herr Josef Weinberger, Publisher, Vienna, for permission to use their text of the opera.

Adèle enters with a letter in her hand. It is from her sister Molly, inviting her to go to a party that same evening at the house of Prince Orlofsky. Molly suggests that Adèle should borrow one of her mistress's gowns, and should pass herself off as an artiste also. The name of Rosalinde, sung by Alfred, catches the ear of the maid, who calls out of the window that only Adèle is there, no Rosalinde, or, at least, none for *him*. Rosalinde herself now enters, and recognizes the voice as that of a former singing-master (and ardent admirer) of hers. Adèle asks permission to go on a visit to a sick aunt. Her mistress regrets that this cannot be, as the Baron has got to go to prison for five days, counting from that night, his crime being that he had struck a sheriff's officer with a whip and apostrophized him as a donkey. Adèle departs in tears, and Alfred enters. Recognition follows between him and Rosalinde, to whom he proceeds to make violent love. He extorts from her a promise that she will receive him during her husband's absence in gaol, and departs singing. The Baron now enters, accompanied by his lawyer, Blind, with whom he is having a violent altercation. The Baron's sentence has been extended from five to eight days, a fact for which he blames his legal adviser; if he does not report himself to the governor of the prison that same day he will be seized and carried off. Adèle enters in tears, bewailing the illness of her aunt. "Nonsense," says the Baron, "ten minutes since I saw her riding through the streets on a donkey!" He then tells Adèle to order the best dinner procurable from the "Golden Lion": he has obtained permission to dine at home with his wife for the last time before his term of imprisonment begins. He also gives instructions that his oldest and shabbiest suit of cothes is to be put out for him to wear in prison.

Dr Falke is now announced, and Rosalinde retires to order some wine for him. He and the Baron address each other by nicknames borrowed from their respective costumes in a carnival of other days, "The Butterfly" and "The Bat." Falke (the Bat) says aside, "Bats have claws, my friend, as you shall learn before the day is out!" but the audience does not as yet know what reason he has to feel vindictive towards his friend and former boon-companion.

Falke informs the Baron that he has come to invite him to a supper to be given that night by Prince Orlofsky, at which

some of the most charming members of the *corps-de-ballet* are to be present. He reminds him of the Bat-and-Butterfly carnival, and when Eisenstein remarks that " it was great sport," he adds darkly : " Yes, for the Butterfly, but not for the Bat ! " The Baron produces an elegant repeater-watch, and Falke twits him with using it as a trap to ensnare ballet-dancers. In the Continental version of the opera they call the watch the " rat-catcher," a " rat " being a colloquial term for a young member of the ballet. Falke persuades his friend to agree to come to Orlofsky's revel in the character of the " Marquis Renard," a young man-about-town. Rosalinde arrives with a tattered coat and a dilapidated hat. Falke departs, ostensibly to announce to Herr Frank, the governor, the imminent arrival of his temporary ' guest,' and the Baron, unopposed by his wife, goes off to prepare for his departure. Adèle enters with a rose-decked calf's head on a large dish, and Rosalinde, remembering her promise to Alfred, decides to get rid of the girl for the evening by granting her permission to go to her " poor sick aunt." Now comes Eisenstein, in evening dress, and busily sprinkling himself with perfume. He borrows a rose for his button-hole from the garnishing of the calf's head, and steals a kiss from Adèle as she pins it in for him. In an affecting trio he takes leave of his wife and her maid, and they of him, after which he dances cheerfully away, followed by Adèle. In a few moments Alfred arrives. He has come, says Rosalinde, to console her, but she takes a virtuous resolution *not* to be consoled. Her former singing-master proceeds to make himself thoroughly at home, even to assuming the dressing-gown and smoking-cap of the absent Baron, and bursts into Bacchanalian song. To them enters Herr Frank, in quest of Eisenstein, whom he naturally imagines Alfred to be, despite his tipsy protestations to the contrary. In response to a hurried request from the alarmed Rosalinde, her admirer finally acquiesces, and, after embracing her warmly, allows Herr Frank to lead him away, still believing him to be her husband.

ACT II

The Ballroom in the Villa of Prince Orlofsky. The chorus of ballet-girls and other guests announces that the supper has been " divine." Adèle and Molly enter, Molly protesting that

she had sent no letter inviting her sister to the ball, and that some one has played a trick on them both. The " some one " is Falke, but that they do not know—as yet. Molly agrees to introduce Adèle as a sister-actress.

Orlofsky and Falke appear, the Prince lamenting his incurable *ennui* and his companion promising to divert him with " a dramatic joke " entitled *The Bat's Revenge*. Molly introduces Adèle as her sister, Olga, a student at the Dramatic Academy, and the Prince, attracted by the girl, gives her a sheaf of roubles to stake on his behalf at the gaming-tables in the adjacent room, whence shouts of laughter are heard. Every one but Orlofsky and Falke departs. The latter refuses to divulge any details of his little plot except the fact that ' Olga ' is the maid of the hero's wife.

Eisenstein now enters, announced as the Marquis Renard, and Falke suggests (aside) that he should invite the wife of this guest to come. While the Prince keeps Eisenstein engaged in conversation, Falke scribbles a note, which he hands to a footman for immediate delivery. Wine is brought, and Orlofsky sings a gay song with the refrain " *Chacun à son gôut !* "

Adèle and Molly return, the former with the Prince's now-empty pocket-book. The Baron recognizes her—and also the frock she is wearing: Adèle recognizes him, and informs Molly, with the added information that her poor mistress believed him to be languishing in prison at that moment. He speaks to her, and asks her if her name was always Olga. She counters by asking if his was always the Marquis Renard, and feigns indignation when he says that he perceives in her a resemblance to his wife's maid. Orlofsky's servant announces the " Chevalier Chagrin "—otherwise Herr Frank, the governor of the gaol, who prefers to assume an alias in such gay company. Orlofsky introduces him to the ' Marquis,' and the two gentlemen become very friendly.

Falke explains that they are expecting a Hungarian lady of high degree whom the tyrannical jealousy of her husband compels to wear a heavy veil and mask on all such occasions as these. Eisenstein begins to flirt with Adèle, and dangles the famous jewelled repeater before her eyes. Rosalinde enters, with a mask in her hand, and Falke draws her attention to her husband's presence and to the manner in which he is employing his time.

She puts on her mask, and presently Eisenstein and Frank enter, arm-in-arm and swearing friendship. Rosalinde then takes Eisenstein apart and engages him in conversation, inducing the idea that she is not a countess but an actress. He produces the all-conquering repeater once more, and makes it chime. After a lively duet, she sinks into a chair, and declares that her heart is beating wildly, but that there is no danger so long as her pulse keeps time with the ticking of a watch. He offers to put this to the test, and they sing an amusing duet, during which Rosalinde deftly pockets the repeater. The rest of the revellers return from the garden, and Orlofsky sings the well-known *Osardas*, in praise of Hungary, its forests, cornfields, and fair women. Orlofsky and the rest demand that Falke shall tell them the story of the Bat, as he promised, but Eisenstein takes the words out of his friend's mouth, and relates their adventure at a carnival, where Falke, dressed as a bat, got extremely drunk. As they drove home through the woods the Baron halted the carriage, and he and the coachman lifted out the sleeping reveller and left him under a tree. So the unfortunate Bat, tightly stitched into his fantastic costume, was forced to make his way home in broad daylight amid the jeers of the street-urchins. Orlofsky proposes a musical toast—Champagne, the King of Wines, and all his loyal subjects. There is a gay closing chorus, during which the various characters pledge and mock each other by turns. Eisenstein and Frank call for their hats and coats, and depart together.

ACT III

The Office of the Governor of the Prison. In the distance the voice of Alfred is heard, singing the aria which opens Act I. Day is dawning. Frosch, the gaoler, enters, staggering slightly and carrying a lighted lantern and a bunch of keys. He announces that this is the merriest prison he ever knew, and that the gin is first-rate. Frank then appears, much dishevelled, and totters to a table on which teacups, etc., are set forth. He and Frosch each imagine that the rockiness of the other is due to his *own* recent potations. Frosch informs the governor that the prisoner in Cell 12—actually Alfred, though passing under the name of Eisenstein—has asked to be allowed to see a lawyer, and that a certain Dr Blind has been sent for.

Adèle and Molly arrive, to confess that at the Prince's ball Adèle had merely masqueraded as an actress. She is actually the maid of Baroness Eisenstein, but she thinks she ought to be trained for the stage. Adèle proceeds to demonstrate her versatility by impersonating successively a village maid, a queen, and a French marquise. The arrival of Eisenstein, whom, of course, he mistakes for the Marquis Renard, puts Frank in a fluster, and he tells Frosch to lock Adèle and Molly into Cell 13. They are hustled away, and Eisenstein enters. He, of course, thinks that Frank is the " Chevalier Chagrin " and concludes that he must have been arrested. Nettled, the governor reveals his identity. The Baron retorts by revealing *his*. Frank declares that this cannot be. He himself arrested the Baron, in the presence of the Baroness, only the night before, and has had him placed in a cell. The questions of the startled Baron are cut short by Frosch, who announces the arrival of yet *another* lady, a veiled one this time. Frank goes away, and a minute later Blind enters. Great confusion follows, and Eisenstein finally persuades the lawyer to lend him his wig, coat, and spectacles so that he may interview the mysterious captive in his stead. They depart, and Frosch ushers in Alfred, still wearing the Baron's smoking-cap and dressing-gown. Frosch goes to fetch Blind, and Rosalinde enters alone. The delighted Alfred imagines she has come to console him in his captivity, but she soon undeceives him. She urges him to get rid of the tell-tale cap and gown and decamp. He tells her that he has sent for a lawyer, and to them enters Eisenstein, disguised as Blind. The supposed lawyer demands to hear all the facts. A comic scene follows between the three, all of them at cross purposes. Eisenstein reproaches Rosalinde for receiving Alfred in her husband's absence ; she replies that her husband is a flirt and a deceiver, who spent the previous evening with a bevy of ballet-girls. Goaded beyond endurance, the Baron tears off his spectacles and wig, and declares that they shall both be punished. Rosalinde, undismayed, will have it that any punishment due should fall upon *him*. While he thunders at Alfred about the fateful dressing-gown she suddenly produces the equally fateful repeater, and her husband then realizes the identity of the masked Hungarian lady of the night before. Frank returns. Then Falke enters, and Rosalinde, divining his

part in the prank, asks him what he has done. Then Frosch comes with the news that the ladies in Number 13 are making a great racket. Frank orders their release, and they enter in a towering rage. Recognition and identification now become general, and the chorus, led by Orlofsky, sweeps in, singing:

Oh, Bat, oh, Bat, have mercy on your prey!

"What does it all mean?" asks the bewildered Baron. "I," cries Falke, "am the avenging Bat!" And he explains that the Prince, Adèle, and Rosalinde were all actors in the comedy devised by him. Alfred succeeds in convincing the penitent Baron that his supper at the Baron's house was merely a part of the prank, and a happy reconciliation follows between Rosalinde and her husband. Frank promises to pay for Adèle's studies at the School of Dramatic Art, but the Prince claims that it must be *his* privilege.

Eisenstein pleads with Rosalinde that champagne has been responsible for the whole misunderstanding, and the opera ends upon a repetition of the chorus in honour of the King of Wines already sung in Act II.

LA CENERENTOLA

Light Melodrama in Two Acts. Music by Gioacchino A. Rossini. Book by Jacopo Ferretti. First produced Rome, January 1817.

SCENE : Salerno.

TIME : Vaguely in the Eighteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

DON RAMIRO, *Prince of Salerno* [Tenor].
DANDINI, *his valet* [Basso].
DON MAGNIFICO, *Baron of Montflagon* [Comic Baritone].
CLORINDA, *his daughter* [Soprano].
THISBE, *his daughter* [Mezzo-soprano].
ANGELINA, *known as "La Cenerentola," or Cinderella, his step-daughter* [Contralto].
ALIDORO, *a Philosopher, Counsellor to the Prince* [Basso].

Lacqueys, Courtiers, Guests, etc.

ARGUMENT

Rossini took as the basis of his 'light melodrama' the familiar old story of Cinderella, the despised stepsister who is rescued from misery and wedded to the very man whom her heartless sisters had hoped to win : but he eliminated the Fairy Godmother, the pumpkin coach, and all the pantomime paraphernalia, substituting for the benevolent Fairy the Philosopher Alidoro, whose magic powers amounted to nothing more than an ability to conjure up a thunderstorm at will. The music is gay and engaging, and presents affinities with that of "William Tell."

ACT I

Scene 1. An Old-fashioned Room in Don Magnifico's House. Cenerentola is discovered preparing coffee for her two stepsisters while they try on posies and trinkets. To emphasize the divergence of temper between them, the two sing a duet in which one warbles "Yes, yes," while the other shrills "No, no." Cenerentola sings a song about a lonely monarch who goes to look for a wife, and, rejecting beauty and riches, chooses

innocence and virtue. Alidoro enters, disguised as a beggar, only to be harshly rebuffed by Clorinda and Thisbe. To their undissembled annoyance Cenerentola gives him a cup of coffee and some bread. The Prince's followers arrive and announce that at the conclusion of the forthcoming ball he will choose for his bride the most charming lady present.

Clorinda and Thisbe, thrilled by this intelligence, overwhelm Cenerentola with orders to bring them combs, caps, scarves, and ribbons. Aroused by the tumult, Don Magnifico, in night-cap and dressing-gown, enters from the adjacent chamber, where he has been enjoying a nap. They have broken his dream, in which he saw a winged ass fly to the summit of a chiming belfry. Each wing, he thinks, must represent one of his daughters; the chime portends a wedding. But what of the ass? "It seems," concludes Don Magnifico, "that the ass must be myself." He retires, followed by Cenerentola carrying his coffee-cup. The sisters depart to array themselves for the ball.

The Prince now enters, disguised as his own valet, and sings a song explaining that Alidoro has advised him to act this masquerade. Cenerentola, returning with the empty cup and saucer, is so much startled to find a stranger in the house that she lets both crash to the ground. She and the Prince promptly proceed to fall in love at first sight, and sing a delightful duet. He asks who she is, and learns that she is Don Magnifico's step-daughter, the child of his once-widowed (and now departed) second wife. The sisters clamour for Cenerentola, and she hurries away. The Prince, meditating joyfully upon his adventure, is interrupted by Don Magnifico in full gala dress, to whom he announces the immediate arrival of his master. Dandini, disguised as Don Ramiro, appears, with a glittering retinue, and is enthusiastically received. In his assumed character he makes himself very agreeable to Clorinda and Thisbe, who have, he assures them, "genuine Etruscan faces." They joyfully conclude that the princely choice will fall upon one or other of them. The Baron sends Cenerentola to fetch his cloak and cane, and follows her into the inner room, whence her voice is heard, pitifully imploring permission to go to the ball, even if only for a quarter of an hour. She is called a "good-for-nothing slut" for her pains, and bidden to sweep the floor

during the absence of the family. Alidoro enters, with a manuscript in his hand—a list of likely candidates for the royal wedding-ring. He questions Don Magnifico concerning his third daughter, whom the Prince may possibly choose ; but the Don declares that his third daughter is dead. " It does not say so in my *codice*," says Alidoro. Dandini drags the Don, Clorinda, and Thisbe away to the ball, but a moment later Alidoro, left alone on the stage, calls Cenerentola from the inner room. To her astonishment and joy, he tells her that *he* will take her to the ball, and has robes and jewels all in readiness. There follows the aria, *Vasto teatro è il mondo*—" All the World's a Stage."

Scene 2. A Room in Don Ramiro's Palace. Don Magnifico, newly appointed Grand-master of the Royal Cellars, dictates to his numerous secretaries a proclamation forbidding the mixing of water with wine. The still-disguised Prince has now formed his opinion of Clorinda and Thisbe, who concentrate their attention upon enslaving the supposed Prince—Dandini. The arrival of a mysterious unknown lady is announced. She enters closely veiled. General speculation. But when she unveils her curious resemblance to their despised step-sister reassures Clorinda and Thisbe as to her probable effect upon the mind of the ' Prince.' They comfort their perturbed father with this assurance, and the whole company sits down to a gorgeous banquet.

ACT II

Scene 1. Another Room in Don Ramiro's Palace. The Baron consoles himself for the jibes of the courtiers by planning ample revenge when one of his daughters shall be wedded to the Prince. He imagines himself receiving crowds of flatterers with condescension, and pocketing bribes without shame. Clorinda and Thisbe, though now at loggerheads, are each under the delusion that she has won the ' Prince's ' heart. Dandini, in the meantime, has become infatuated with Cenerentola, who, believing him to be Don Ramiro, rejects his suit, acknowledging that she is in love with his valet. The Prince chances to overhear this avowal. Alidoro, standing apart, also overhears and rejoices. The Prince declares his love to Cenerentola, who

promises to marry him when he has discovered her real name and station. She gives him a bracelet: he will find its twin upon her right wrist when they meet again. She slips away, and the enchanted Don Ramiro consults Alidoro as to his next course of action. Let him, says the sage, follow the dictates of his heart. The Prince then decrees that Dandini shall sink into the *rôle* of valet once more, and that all the guests shall quit the palace. Before this can be effected, however, the Baron enters and urges Dandini, whom he still takes for the Prince, to relieve the intolerable uncertainty of Clorinda and Thisbe by choosing between them.

Dandini asks the Baron confidentially upon what terms he would give him the hand of one of them. Don Magnifico is prompt with his reply. His daughter must have at least thirty lacqueys to wait on her; at least sixteen horses; a few dozen Dukes in attendance; a coach with six torch-bearing footmen: and a banquet " with ices " constantly spread. Dandini chooses this moment to reveal the truth that he is only a valet and cannot aspire to wed either Clorinda or Thisbe. The Baron is not unnaturally furious, but Dandini urges him to be prudent and clear out.

Scene 2. The Baron's House again. Clorinda and Thisbe are looking with dark surmise at Cenerentola, in whom they discern a curious resemblance to the fatal stranger at the royal ball. Thunder is heard, blending with the sound of carriage-wheels, and followed by a loud crash outside. Alidoro has raised a tempest with the aid of magic arts, and has contrived that the Prince's carriage shall be overturned at the Baron's very door.

The Prince and Dandini enter. Don Magnifico, aware now of their respective identities, curtly orders Cenerentola to bring forward a chair " for his Highness." She obeys, but brings the chair to Dandini. When the truth transpires, she raises her hands to her face in confusion, thus revealing the bracelet on her right arm. The incident leads naturally to the *dénouement*. The Baron bids Cenerentola return to " her proper sphere, the kitchen." Who has told *her* to thrust herself into the presence of " heroes " ? But he is sharply rebuked by Don Ramiro for insulting " her whom he adores." The Prince takes Cenerentola by the hand; her step-sisters jeer, and ask why she does not realize that he is only making fun of her. He swears that she

and none other shall be his Princess. After the Baron and his daughters have repelled her efforts to take a friendly leave of them Cenerentola is led away by her lover. Alidoro tells Clorinda and Thisbe that though the pill is a hard one they needs must gulp it down and humble themselves before their once-despised step-sister.

Scene 3. A Throne-room in Don Ramiro's Palace. The Prince and Cenerentola are seated in rich attire, surrounded by courtiers, with Alidoro on one side and Dandini on the other. In a corner stands Don Magnifico, looking very crestfallen. Clorinda and Thisbe also show signs of embarrassment. But Cenerentola intercedes for them with her husband. All old wrongs, she says, are banished from her mind of new-found joys. She embraces her former tormentors amid general jubilation.

THE DAMNATION OF FAUST

A Dramatic Legend in Four Parts. Music by Hector Berlioz. Words adapted from Gérard de Nerval's version of Goethe's famous play. First produced as a concert-piece at the Opéra Comique, Paris, December 6, 1846. *Arranged for the operatic stage by Raoul Gunsbourg, and produced by him at Monte Carlo, February* 18, 1893.

SCENE : The Plains of Hungary. Leipzig. The Banks of the Elbe. Marguerite's House. The Infernal Regions. Paradise.

TIME : The Sixteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

MARGUERITE [Soprano].
FAUST [Tenor].
MEPHISTOPHELES [Basso].
BRANDER [Basso].

Students, Soldiers, Citizens, Angels, Sylphs, etc.

ARGUMENT

Berlioz's musical setting of Goethe's "Faust" is less an opera than a dramatic cantata. It contains some of his best-known music, including the "Song of the Rat" and the ballet of the Sylphs, but is somewhat shapeless and unwieldly for production on the stage.

When *The Damnation of Faust* was produced as a concert-piece the first part showed Faust meditating vaguely "in the plains of Hungary." There was a dance and chorus of peasants, and soldiers marched past to the strains of the celebrated Rákóczy march, founded on a traditional Hungarian air. In the operatic version the opening scene shows the interior of a medieval castle. From the casement a sally-port is visible, whence marching soldiers emerge.

Next, Faust is discovered in his study, about to quaff a goblet of poison. Suddenly the back wall is cleft asunder, revealing the interior of a church, with a congregation chanting an Easter hymn.

Mephistopheles enters, and to counteract the possible influence of the sacred music lures Faust away to a haunt of revelry.

The scene now changes to Auerbach's cellar in Leipzig, where soldiers and students are holding a wild revel. Brander sings the famous Song of the Rat, over whom the boisterous crowd intones a burlesque requiem, ending in a complicated fugal 'Amen.' The 'turn' provided by Mephistopheles himself is the Song of the Flea, its erratic accompaniment suggesting the leaps of the abhorrent insect.

The next scene is on the banks of the Elbe, where the sleeping Faust beholds an aerial ballet of sylphs, and has a vision of Marguerite. After the ballet come a soldier's chorus, and a student's song in Latin.

The fourth scene is in Marguerite's house. Through the open door soldiers and students are seen and heard sauntering and singing in the street outside. Marguerite sings *Der König im Thule*, described by Berlioz—not inappropriately—as 'a Gothic song.' The Invocation of Mephistopheles is followed by the Dance of the Will-o'-the-wisps, and then by the Tempter's Serenade, grotesque and sinister. Faust enters, and sings a duet with Marguerite. Mephistopheles intervenes, transfiguring the duet into a trio, and urging Faust to depart with him.

Marguerite, left alone, does not sing Goethe's beautiful lyric, *Mein Ruh ist hin*—"Gone is my Peace," but another, written by Berlioz himself, *L'amour, l'ardente flamme*—"Love, the ardent flame." In the distance the chanting of the soldiers and the students dies away: drums and trumpets give the sunset signal. Overwhelmed by remorse, Marguerite falls fainting to the ground.

Fifth Scene. A wild mountain gorge. Faust sings his long-drawn out soliloquy "Oh, Nature, vast, inscrutable, and proud." There is a thrilling panoramic ride to the Infernal Regions, ending in a chaos of sound—the Chorus of the Lost Spirits. Then the golden clouds of the upper air open, and a chorus of angels welcomes Marguerite's ascending soul into Paradise. Tableau—the apotheosis of Marguerite.

SCHWANDA THE BAGPIPER

Opera in Two Acts and Five Scenes. Music by Jaromir Weinberger. Book by Milos Kares. First produced at Prague, April 1927 ; *Berlin,* 1928.

SCENE : The Neighbourhood of Strakonitz, in Bohemia. The Infernal Regions.

TIME : The Seventeenth Century.

CHARACTERS

SCHWANDA, *the Piper of Strakonitz* [Baritone].
DOROTA, *his wife* [Soprano].
BABINSKY, *a robber* [Tenor].
QUEEN ICEHEART [Mezzo-soprano]
THE DEVIL [Basso].
THE MAGICIAN [Basso].
THE JUDGE [Tenor].
THE EXECUTIONER [Tenor].
SATAN'S FAMILIAR [Tenor].
THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOSTS OF HELL [Tenor].

The Warden of the Keys, Foresters, Courtiers, Soldiers, Spectators, Maids-of-honour, Dancers, Phantoms, etc.

ARGUMENT

Jaromir Weinberger's light-hearted, colourful opera came as a welcome relief to a Continental public sated with the gloomy modernism of Berg, Hindemith, and Weill. The story is borrowed from the old Bohemian legend of the brilliant bagpiper of Strakonitz, whose very name—"Schwanda"—meant happiness. On this story, for the enrichment of the plot and action, Weinberger superimposed the figure of the robber Babinsky, an authentic personage who died as late as the year 1879. *Like his compatriot Smetana, the composer has made full and effective use of themes from his national folk-music. He himself has told us that while he was writing the opera his thoughts went back to his early home, where, gathered round a flickering open-air fire in the autumn twilight, the shepherds would sing their mournful ancient songs. From this*

source was derived the charming aria " Auf unserem Hof daheim," introduced no less than three times.
When " Schwanda the Bagpiper " was produced at Covent Garden in May 1934 the piper's polka leaped into immediate popularity alike with opera-goers, concert audiences, and owners of gramophones.[1]

ACT I

Scene 1. Outside Schwanda's Home. A cottage to the left: in the centre, a blossoming linden-tree, under which are wooden benches and a table. Forest glades in the background.
Two foresters enter in haste and beat upon the cottage door. Dorota emerges, and they ask her whether she has seen the notorious robber, Babinsky, whom they are pursuing. Dorota has never even heard of the robber, and they depart as hurriedly as they came. As soon as they are gone, a mocking voice in the linden-tree sings " Cuckoo ! " and a man dressed all in black, with large white collar and cuffs, swings himself down from the branches. It is Babinsky.
Questioned by the startled Dorota, he says he has come from the moon on the back of a flying-fish. She explains that she cannot invite him into the cottage until the return of her husband, Schwanda, the celebrated piper of Strakonitz, to whom she has been married only a month. To her surprise, the name conveys nothing to the stranger. She declares that Satan himself envies Schwanda's skill. " Are you Satan by any chance ? " she asks. " Do I look like Satan ? " asks Babinsky, affronted. " Frankly, yes," retorts Dorota.
Schwanda now returns from working in the fields, and invites the stranger to eat with him and his wife at the table under the tree. Their guest charms them with tales of the " great Babinsky," the friend of the poor and the protector of the oppressed. Schwanda sighs at the thought of the wide world far beyond his reach. Dorota says she knows a better song, and sings the charming little aria, *Auf unserem Hof daheim* (Over the Roof of our Home), which is heard again at the end of Scene 3.

[1] My thanks are due to Messrs Universal-Edition, A.G., Publishers, Vienna, for permission to use their text of the opera.

Babinsky explains that wherever the "great Babinsky" has sojourned it is his habit to leave one of his cuffs behind with this message scribbled on it: "My friend, accept best greetings from me, with this fringed cuff. You have been warned once. Whoever fails to understand this message will soon have me as his guest again."

While Dorota goes into the cottage to fetch more food the robber tries to persuade Schwanda to go out and seek his fortune in that wide world of which he dreams. "A man of your talents," he says, "could soon make his way." He describes the sad plight of rich folk, weary of the tedium of their lives, and tells of the Queen with the Frozen Heart, waiting for someone to come and melt her. Since the loss of her lily-sceptre set with diamonds her heart has turned to ice. Schwanda might perhaps break the spell.

The Bagpiper resolves to try his luck. He seizes his pipes while Babinsky scribbles on his cuff, which he slips off and places on the table under the tree. They steal away together, the robber calling "Cuckoo!" by way of farewell.

Dorota comes out and sees the cuff. "Babinsky," she cries, "Babinsky the robber was there! He has stolen away my love. I must go and find him!"

Scene 2. A Room in the Palace of Queen Iceheart. An elaborate and gorgeous ballet-pantomime is performed before the Queen, who, like Queen Victoria on a historic occasion, is "not amused." The Court Magician next tries his hand, but without avail. He cannot retrieve the lost sceptre, and she will have none of him. Schwanda enters, playing a polka of such infectious gaiety that the maids of honour and the pages break into a dance. "Who are you?" asks the Queen, "you bring new life into this house with your music." "I am Schwanda! I go wherever there is sadness, and when I play upon my pipes the whole world is merry." "Stay with me," exclaims the Queen, "and I am thine!" Schwanda, carried away by her enthusiasm, agrees. The wedding is to take place without delay. The piper solemnly deposits his bagpipes upon the throne, in token of his kingship. "Now," he sings, "I am a king—as all men fain would be." And he adds that his authority rests not upon weapons but upon music. He bids all the company turn their backs upon him and the Queen while he kisses

her. At this juncture Dorota enters, followed by the Magician. She has tracked down her wandering husband at last, and begins to upbraid him for his faithlessness. "Who is this woman?" asks the Queen. "It is Dorota," says Schwanda. "She is his sweetheart!" interjects the Magician. "Take her away and kill her!" says the Queen.

The guards seize Dorota, but Schwanda rushes to her rescue and flings himself upon them. During the tumult the Magician gets hold of the bagpipes. When Schwanda and Dorota, in accordance with the Queen's command, are dragged away for trial and execution, the Magician gives orders that the pipes are to be taken away and locked up in the deepest cellar beneath the palace. The Warden of the Keys bows and obeys.

Scene 3. Outside the City Wall. The huge, fortified gates of the city stand open. Upon a platform, surrounded by her ladies, sits the Queen, with the Magician near her. Upon another platform the Judge is enthroned. A scaffold has been erected, and a block stands on it. Many spectators gaze at the guards, the trumpeters, and the Executioner with his axe. Schwanda and Dorota are seen near the scaffold. A bell tolls. A herald proclaims that the two culprits are to be executed on the spot. Schwanda pleads that he may be allowed to play his beloved bagpipes for the last time. The Magician opposes this plea, but the Queen relents, and the Warden of the Keys is dispatched to fetch the pipes. During a duet between Schwanda and Dorota the Executioner, growing weary, shifts his axe from one shoulder to another, and finally lays it down. At this moment a hand is suddenly stretched out over the scaffold, and effects an exchange which later becomes apparent. The Judge rises. The bells toll. Despite his struggles the Executioner's assistants drag Schwanda towards the block. Dorota wrings her hands. But instead of the axe the Executioner finds that he is grasping a broomstick with a large white cuff attached to it. The crowd laughs. The Executioner says he will send for another axe. Meanwhile Babinsky heaves himself up on the farther side of the scaffold and slips the bagpipes into Schwanda's hand. Dorota recognizes Babinsky and utters his name. He is promptly seized by the guard.

Schwanda now begins to play his irresistible polka, the *Odzemek*, with startling results. Judge, spectators, Queen, Magician,

soldiers, and executioners begin to dance. Babinsky is thus able to escape from his captors. The robber deftly abstracts the keys of the city gates from the girdle of the Warden of the Keys. Without ceasing to play Schwanda lures the people towards these gates, and, aided by Babinsky and Dorota, he hustles them all inside. When this is done Babinsky locks the gates, afterwards attaching one of his famous cuffs to the key.

Schwanda now tries to woo Dorota again, and the trio known as the *Furiente* follows. She is almost ready to relent when he declares that he never even gave the Queen one kiss. "Look at that liar!" cries Dorota. Schwanda protests that if he ever gave the Queen even a half, even a quarter, even a fraction of a kiss, may the Devil come and carry him away on the spot.

The scene darkens suddenly. Thunder is heard. Smoke and flame issue from a cleft in the ground. Schwanda sinks down and vanishes from view. Babinsky now begins to make love to Dorota. He says he will bring Schwanda back if she really desires it, but she would find him a changed man after his experiences among the great folk at Court. She waves him away, and he retires into a corner as if ashamed, while she sadly sings the aria *Auf unserem Hof daheim*, first heard in the first scene of the same Act.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Infernal Regions. The Devil is sitting at a table, playing Patience. At a little distance sits Schwanda, looking angry and reckless. The Devil, wearying of his game, tries to persuade the piper to make music for him. What complaints has he to make of his treatment since he came to Hell? Why will he not play? "I will *not* play," says Schwanda stubbornly. "I do not *beg* you, I *command* you to play!" exclaims the Prince of Darkness.

"Good Uncle Devil," returns Schwanda, "you cannot give orders to *me*. I do not belong legally to you. So I will not play."

Satan laments his hard lot. No one will play cards with him because he always wins. He renews his entreaties that Schwanda will play him a tune. Schwanda will not. But he consents to lend the pipes to the Devil, who immediately begins to make

terrible cacophonous music, in which are mingled the sounds of syrens, discordant bells, escaping steam, winding-gear, and dissonant organ-notes, and to which a weird ballet of witches, bats, and phantoms is danced.

Schwanda snatches his pipes back again; he can stand no more. "Your pipes are out of tune!" says Satan. "Listen, you old rascal," retorts Schwanda, "I am *not* going to play!"

Satan now reiterates his plea that the piper will tell him why he is so inexorably hostile. There follows the charming aria, *Wie kann ich denn vergessen, was mein Liebestes war*—"How can I forget what was most dear to me?"

Satan, scenting where the wind sits, then conjures up a vision of Dorota. "Look," says he, "I return you good for evil!" "Dorota," cries Schwanda, "it is she!" "She will be yours," promises the tempter, "when you have signed this bond." And he holds out a parchment, and a quill from a raven's wing. "For Dorota I would give my life," says Schwanda. He signs, but the vision fades, and derisive, discordant music is heard behind the scenes. "Liar, cheat!" cries the disillusioned piper. "Now, play to me," says Satan, "for now you belong lawfully to Hell!" He summons up his legions, and a chorus of fiends and imps appears, bearing a flaming cauldron, and shouting "Out with your forks!" "Out with your goads!" "Out with your pea-shooters!" They seize Schwanda and are about to torture him when Babinsky suddenly appears at the back of the scene. Silence. "What?" says he, "do you want to see my passport? That's a good joke! Lord Satan knows me well!"

Warmly welcomed by the hosts of Hell, with their Captain at their head, Babinsky next perceives Schwanda. "How come *you* here?" he asks. "That," replies Schwanda, "is just what I should like to know myself." "But it was such a shameless lie!" protests the robber. "A man can't tell a woman everything," returns the unabashed piper. He asks for news of Dorota, and is told that she believes him to be off on fresh adventures. Babinsky, in reply to a query from Satan, admits that he finds Hell "tolerable but rather slow." Satan invites him to a game of cards. Babinsky says he plays very high. What will Satan stake? Schwanda's pipes against a bag of stolen gold!

It soon appears that in the matter of gambling the Prince of Darkness has met his match at last. He passes from one pledge to another, staking all that he possesses, until Babinsky demands that the stakes shall be Schwanda's soul against his own. It avails the Devil nothing to hide cards in his boots: the robber knows a trick worth two of that, and is too much for him. Babinsky wins, and proceeds to tear up the bond signed by Schwanda. Satan's familiar points out that in the course of the game his Satanic Majesty has lost everything he possesses. In a word, as Satan himself observes, the Devil is a poor Devil now! No wine for him henceforth: only water! And Hell will be cast upon the scrap-heap as old iron. But Babinsky, with a noble gesture, relinquishes all his winnings, except Schwanda's bagpipes and Schwanda's soul. The hosts of Hell cheer wildly. "Even the Devil," says Satan, "could not forget such magnanimous behaviour." He will always be at Babinsky's service, always regard him as a member of the family. But he regrets that he has never heard Schwanda's pipes. Schwanda relents; he will play one tune by way of farewell.

Scene 2. The Same as the First Scene of the First Act. Babinsky (wearing a false moustache) and Schwanda enter, the latter in great haste to reach his house. A short spoken dialogue ushers in the Scene. The robber tells Schwanda that his absence has actually lasted twenty years. People alter in twenty years. Look at the fine moustache he himself has grown! As for Dorota, she is now an old peasant woman, hard of hearing and with scanty hair. Let Schwanda come with him again to the wide world, to the Queens and the Princesses who are young and fair!

Schwanda pays no heed. "Dorota, Dorota!" he cries. Dorota opens the door of the cottage—she is as young and as comely as ever. Babinsky mournfully removes his false moustache. He is lucky, he declares, in everything but love. Completely discouraged, he steals away, but not before he has been warmly thanked both by Schwanda and by Dorota. The reunited lovers fold each other in a long embrace; oblivious of everything, they stand while their neighbours flock round to greet them.

Then, for the third and last time, Dorota sings the aria *Auf unserem Hof daheim*, now as a duet with Schwanda instead of as a solo.

THE SAVOY OPERAS

THE famous " Gilbert and Sullivan " operas, properly called the " Savoy Operas " from the name of the theatre which was eventually built for them by Richard D'Oyly Carte, were the result of a particularly felicitous collaboration between Sir William Schwenk Gilbert, who wrote all the libretti, and Sir Arthur Sullivan, who composed the whole of the music for them.

TRIAL BY JURY

Comic Opera in One Act. First produced at the Royalty Theatre, London, March 25, 1875.

SCENE : A Court of Justice.

TIME : The Seventies of Last Century.

CHARACTERS

THE LEARNED JUDGE.
ANGELINA, *the Plaintiff.*
EDWIN, *the Defendant.*
COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF.
USHER.
FOREMAN OF THE JURY.
ASSOCIATE.
FIRST BRIDESMAID.

Barristers, Attorneys, Jurymen, Bridesmaids.

ARGUMENT

This early Gilbertian trifle depicting a farcical Court of Justice trying a Breach of Promise case exhibits, besides characteristic touches of light satire, the embryo of the Gilbertian " predicament " which was afterwards to be so skilfully developed by the librettist.

As the hour of ten is sounding the Usher announces a Breach of Promise case brought against Edwin by Angelina. Edwin,

entering, confides in the Jury that as "joy incessant palls the sense" he threw over Angelina and made love to another in order to have a change. The Judge enters, and explains how, starting as an impecunious young barrister, he became a Judge by making love to a rich and influential attorney's elderly, ugly daughter until he had gained the position he desired, when he promptly jilted her; he is thus peculiarly fitted to try a Breach of Promise case. He emphasizes his accommodating nature in affairs of the heart by passing a note to the first Bridesmaid as the chorus of Bridesmaids enters, then, as Angelina appears, by transferring his affections (and the note) to her. Angelina, sobbing, casts herself upon the breasts successively of Counsel, Foreman of the Jury, and the Judge. Edwin, speaking in his own defence, explains that as Nature is constantly changing so is the object of his love, but he is willing to marry the plaintiff to-day and his other love on the morrow. This places the Court in a dilemma—if defendant refuses to marry the plaintiff the Breach of Promise is proved, if he marries both he commits "a serious crime." The Judge, remarking that, "though all declare my law is fudge, yet of beauty I'm a judge," resolves the problem by offering to marry the lady himself.

THE SORCERER

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Opéra Comique, London, November 17, 1877.

SCENE : Exterior of Sir Marmaduke's Elizabethan Mansion.

TIME : The Seventies of Last Century.

CHARACTERS

SIR MARMADUKE POINTDEXTRE, *an elderly baronet.*
ALEXIS, *of the Grenadier Guards, his son.*
DR DALY, *vicar of Ploverleigh.*
NOTARY.
JOHN WELLINGTON WELLS, *of J. W. Wells & Co., family sorcerers.*
LADY SANGAZURE, *a Lady of ancient lineage.*
ALINE, *her daughter, betrothed to Alexis.*
MRS PARTLET (ZORAH), *a pew-opener.*
CONSTANCE, *her daughter.*

Chorus of Villagers.

ARGUMENT

Through a modernized perversion of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" theme Gilbert here shows that love that scorns the artificial barriers of rank, wealth, education, age, and beauty is not necessarily the source of every earthly joy.

ACT I

Scene : Outside Sir Marmaduke's Elizabethan mansion. The villagers are hailing the betrothal of Aline and Sir Marmaduke's son, Alexis. Constance, however, sighs in the midst of the jollity, and when Mrs Partlet, her mother, asks her why, explains that she is in love with Dr Daly, the elderly vicar, who, she fears, does not return her love. Her mother soon discovers the truth of this surmise, and that the vicar, overwhelmed by memories of his lost youth, thinks of Constance only as a child. He rouses himself from the past to greet the approaching Sir Marmaduke and Alexis ; Aline then enters, rapturous at her betrothal.

She is followed by her mother, Lady Sangazure. On seeing each other this lady of ancient lineage and Sir Marmaduke exhibit strong signs of emotion which they try to repress, for fifty years ago they were in love. An ugly, deaf old notary enters with the marriage contract, which Aline and Alexis sign. The two are left alone, and Alexis propounds to Aline his theory that love is the source of every earthly joy, and that in the pursuit of it none should pay heed to the artificial barriers of rank, education, age, etc., and that he has taken steps to prove it by engaging Wellington Wells (a somewhat commercially minded sorcerer) to distribute throughout the village a love philtre which will make those who drink it fall in love with the first person they meet afterwards. He orders a page to usher in Mr Wells, and arranges with him to place the philtre in the communal teapot at the coming revelries. The stage grows dark ; Mr Wells utters an Incantation over the potion ; voices of demon souls are heard, after which the stage lightens again, the villagers enter, dancing joyously, and the banquet begins. All the villagers and Sir Marmaduke and Lady Sangazure drink, stagger about the stage, and then fall insensible.

ACT II

Scene : Outside the mansion in the moonlight, twelve hours later. The peasantry are all still asleep when Mr Wells tiptoes in with Aline and Alexis. The sorcerer explains, before he creeps away again with his companions, that to preserve their dignity he has had Sir Marmaduke and Lady Sangazure removed to their own beds. As soon as the trio has departed the villagers wake, and youths and maidens make love in chorus. In the midst of this Constance enters, in love, by virtue of the potion, with the Notary. Alexis and Aline, returning, rejoice in the good that will come of the ill-assorted unions in the making, where the barriers of wealth, age, etc., have been broken down, and Alexis implores Aline to drink the potion also, and make their love immortal. The vicar wanders in, puzzled at the universal desire for matrimony, followed by Sir Marmaduke escorting Mrs Partlet, with whom, under the influence of the philtre, he has fallen in love. Alexis hides his real sentiments, but begins to be uncertain about the desirability of the barriers

of wealth and rank being *always* broken down. Mr Wells suspects that he has worked evil with his spells, especially when Lady Sangazure enters and to his horror promptly falls in love with him. They go out, and Aline enters and drinks the potion. She falls in love immediately with Dr Daly, who happens to come in at that moment. He too under the spell falls in love with her. No sooner has he done so than Alexis enters, and in the ensuing altercation the vicar declares he will take a Colonial Bishopric and leave them all for ever. Alexis turns to the sorcerer, asking if nothing can be done to reverse the spell. The sorcerer replies yes, if either Alexis or he dies. All have now gathered round, and they insist that as the sorcerer has caused all the trouble he must be the one to die. At last he agrees. Everybody leaves his present partner for his old love —Sir Marmaduke goes to Lady Sangazure, Aline to Alexis, Dr Daly to Constance, and the Notary to Mrs Partlet; and Mr Wells sinks amid red fire into the earth.

H.M.S. "PINAFORE"; OR, THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Opéra Comique, London, May 25, 1878.

SCENE : The Quarterdeck of H.M.S. *Pinafore.*

TIME : The Seventies of Last Century.

CHARACTERS

THE RIGHT HON. SIR JOSEPH PORTER, K.C.B., *First Lord of the Admiralty.*
CAPTAIN CORCORAN, *commanding H.M.S. "Pinafore."*
TOM TUCKER, *midshipmite.*
RALPH RACKSTRAW, *able seaman.*
DICK DEADEYE, *able seaman.*
BILL BOBSTAY, *boatswain's mate.*
BOB BECKET, *carpenter's mate.*
JOSEPHINE, *the captain's daughter.*
HEBE, *Sir Joseph's first cousin.*
MRS CRIPPS (LITTLE BUTTERCUP), *a Portsmouth bumboat woman.*

First Lord's Sisters, his Cousins, his Aunts, Sailors Marines, etc.

ARGUMENT

This opera, which contains some of the drollest of the librettist's songs, shows his developing skill in the management of more complicated plots. His burlesque treatment of the language and love situations of some of the lesser Victorian novelists is still keenly appreciated by present-day audiences.

ACT I

The Quarterdeck of H.M.S. *Pinafore*, off Portsmouth, at noon. The sailors on board are greeted by "Little Buttercup," a Portsmouth bumboat woman, who enumerates the great variety of goods she has to sell. Between whiles she gives dark hints of a guilty secret in her past. Dick Deadeye, an unpopular member of the crew, proceeds to give some examples of his

villainous nature, which are interrupted by young Ralph Rackstraw, who appears singing a doleful ditty, for alas!—plain A.B. as he is, he loves above his station—no less a one than his captain's daughter. Presently that captain approaches, and very politely greets his men, for he never—well, hardly ever—uses bad language. But when the crew have left him alone Buttercup returns to find him most downcast, urges him to tell her why he is so sad, and learns that, though his daughter Josephine is sought in marriage by the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., First Lord of the Admiralty, she will have none of him. Indeed, Josephine soon enters and announces that she can never love Sir Joseph as her heart is given to another—a humble sailor on board that very ship. The Captain has just sent her away to think the matter over when Sir Joseph comes aboard, attended by a crowd of his female relatives. He satisfies himself that the crew is being politely treated, for a British seaman, he affirms, is any man's equal. Ralph, hearing this, and realizing his equality with any man alive, decides to speak his love, and when the others have gone and Josephine enters he does so. She indignantly rejects him. In despair Ralph tells his shipmates that he means to shoot himself, and is on the point of doing so when Josephine, rushing in in the nick of time, stops him, and confesses her love. While Dick Deadeye mutters ominous words aside she and Ralph, abetted by the crew and Hebe, Sir Joseph's first cousin, who wants to marry that gentleman herself, arrange to steal ashore that night and get married.

ACT II

The same night on the Quarterdeck. Captain Corcoran, in sentimental mood, is singing in the moonlight, gazed at by Buttercup. He mourns that everything is at sixes and sevens. Buttercup hints at her love for him; then she mysteriously tells him of a change in store for him, and melodramatically goes out. The captain's next visitor is Sir Joseph, complaining of Josephine's coldness. Corcoran suggests that his exalted rank may have dazzled the girl, and advises him to remind her that love levels all ranks. When they have disappeared from the scene Josephine enters, ready for escape, to be bearded

once again by Sir Joseph, who assures her that rank is of no consequence in love—a sentiment which makes her all the more eager to marry her A.B. Dick Deadeye meanwhile has been watching his opportunity, and, finding the captain alone, he reveals Josephine's plan of escape. Consequently, when Ralph and the Boatswain meet Josephine accompanied by Buttercup, and all is ready for the escape, Corcoran bursts in, begins a frightful altercation, and exclaims, "Damme!" Not only Sir Joseph's female relations, but Sir Joseph himself hear the fatal word, and, horrified at such a lapse in front of the crew, the First Lord orders the captain in disgrace to his cabin. Ralph and Josephine then reveal their love to Sir Joseph. He, furious, commands Ralph to be loaded with chains and led to a dungeon (if the ship possesses such a thing); whereupon Buttercup, resolving to speak at last, confesses her guilty secret: years ago, when both were babies, she nursed Ralph and the captain, and exchanged them, so that Ralph is really the captain and the captain is Ralph. Sir Joseph's love immediately cools, and he hands over Josephine, the daughter now of a mere A.B., to Ralph, who has come back appropriately attired as captain. The former Captain and Buttercup rush into each other's arms, and Sir Joseph is comforted by Hebe, who offers to soothe his declining days.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; OR, THE SLAVE OF DUTY

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Opéra Comique, London, April 3, 1880.

SCENE: The Cornish Coast.

TIME: 1880.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR-GENERAL STANLEY
THE PIRATE KING.
SAMUEL, *his lieutenant.*
FREDERIC, *the pirate apprentice.*
SERGEANT OF POLICE.
MABEL, EDITH, KATE, ISABEL } *General Stanley's daughters.*
RUTH, *a pirate maid-of-all-work.*

Chorus of Pirates, Police, and General Stanley's Daughters.

ARGUMENT

It is as unfortunate to be born on February 29 as on All Fools' Day, and in the "Pirates of Penzance" we are shown the pitfalls that lie before one who finds what he would do at variance with what his duty tells him he must, as a result of his unlucky birth date.

ACT I

A Rocky Seashore on the Cornish Coast. On this day Frederic, the pirate apprentice, is out of his indentures and becomes a fully fledged member of the band, and he informs his comrades that consequently he is leaving them for ever. He has done his best for them, because it was his duty under his indentures so to do, and he is a slave to duty; but his association with the band was an error. The pirate maid-of-all-work, Ruth, explains.

As nurserymaid to Frederic years ago it fell to her lot to bind the little lad apprentice to a pilot, but, being a trifle hard of hearing, she did not quite catch the word, and bound him instead to a pirate. Discovering, too late, her error, and not daring to return to her master, she offered herself as maid-of-all-work to the pirates. She implores and gains Frederic's pardon, but he is careful to explain that, though he loves all the pirate band individually, collectively he detests them, and feels it his duty to devote himself to their extermination. All sympathize with him, and Samuel, the Lieutenant, adds that he doesn't blame him for going, for they have never made piracy pay. Frederic says the reason for that is clear: they are too tender-hearted, especially over orphans; and now it has got about that they make a point of never molesting orphans, every one they capture turns out to be one. Ruth wants to know what is to become of her. The King and the pirates urge Frederic to take her with him, and Ruth joins in their prayers. He hesitates, and because he has seen no other woman since he was eight years old and has no means of judging whether she is beautiful or not, he asks her if she considers herself so—her age shall be no obstacle to their union if she is fair. Ruth has just given the required assurance when a chorus of girls' voices is heard, and Frederic sees a bevy of beautiful maidens. He turns to Ruth, denouncing her for deceiving him about her beauty, and she goes off in despair. Afraid of alarming the maidens by his costume, he hides in a cave as they come climbing over the rocks. They are Edith, Kate, Mabel, Isabel, and the other daughters of Major-General Stanley, who has lagged behind; and in merry mood they decide to paddle in the sea till he and the servants arrive with luncheon. They have each got as far as taking off one shoe when Frederic bursts upon them, conceiving it to be his duty to inform them that their proceedings are not unwitnessed. He is a pirate (they all recoil in horror), but is there not one among them who will love him? Mabel steps forward. Meanwhile the pirate band has stealthily crept round Mabel's sisters, and now each pirate seizes a girl, just as their father enters. His daughters cry to him that these men who would force them into marriage are the famous Pirates of Penzance. At once the Major-General has an idea. He announces that he is—an orphan! "Oh, dash it all!" exclaim the disgusted

pirates. He begs them to leave him his daughters, his sole remaining joy; and the Pirate King, touched to the heart, frees them all.

ACT II

A Ruined Chapel by Moonlight. General Stanley, surrounded by his daughters, is lamenting his misspent life, especially the lie he told the pirates, for the truth is he is *not* an orphan! Frederic appears and tries to comfort him by telling of his plan to atone for his association with the pirates by exterminating them with the aid of a police force, which he calls in and exhibits to him. But just as Frederic is rejoicing at his scheme the Pirate King and Ruth accost him, and inform him of a curious circumstance. They have discovered he was born on February 29, and therefore, though he has lived twenty-one years, by birthdays he is only five. He was apprenticed to them until his twenty-first *birthday*, and they wish to remind him that it is consequently his duty to remain with the band. As a slave to duty Frederic can do nothing but yield, and, once more a member of the company, he feels bound to tell the pirates that Major-General Stanley is no orphan—nay, more, never was one! The King vows swift vengeance and departs with Ruth; and when Mabel enters and asks Frederic the cause of his distress he tells her. She begs him to stay with her, but stern duty calls him and he must obey its call. In 1940, when he comes of age, he will return and claim her. He rushes to the window of the chapel and leaps out. The Police march in, and to them Mabel explains the situation. They decide to capture the pirates without Frederic's aid, and almost at once the outlaws are heard approaching. The police hide, and the pirates come in with the King, Frederic, and Ruth. They too hide as the Major-General approaches with a light, his conscience tormented still by thoughts of his falsehood. He is followed by his daughters, also in night attire, and carrying lights. The Pirate King, springing from concealment, orders his men to seize the General. Mabel calls on Frederic to save them, but though he "would if he could, he is not able." The Pirate King reproaches the General for his deceit, and has just bidden him prepare for death when out dash the police. They struggle with the pirates,

who overcome them. "Don't say you are orphans!" the King urges them. But the police have a different trump card. "We charge you yield in Queen Victoria's name!" they shout. Overcome by their loyalty, the pirates kneel and the police get up. The General has just ordered the outlaws to be led off, when Ruth announces that these are no common pirates, but noblemen who have gone wrong. The General is at once contrite, for all Englishmen "love their House of Peers." The pirates are released, and the General bids them resume their ranks and legislative duties and hands over his daughters to them.

PATIENCE ; OR, BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Opéra Comique, London, April 23, 1881.

SCENE : A Romantic Countryside.

TIME : The later Victorian Age.

CHARACTERS

COLONEL CALVERLEY
MAJOR MURGATROYD
LIEUTENANT THE DUKE OF DUNSTABLE } *officers of Dragoon Guards.*

REGINALD BUNTHORNE, *a fleshly poet.*
ARCHIBALD GROSVENOR, *an idyllic poet.*
MR BUNTHORNE'S SOLICITOR.

THE LADY ANGELA
THE LADY SAPHIR
THE LADY ELLA
THE LADY JANE } *rapturous maidens.*

PATIENCE, *a dairy maid.*

Chorus of Rapturous Maidens and Officers of Dragoon Guards.

ARGUMENT

" Patience " travestied and killed by ridicule the " æsthetic movement "—the craze which swept Society for languorous attitudes, blue china and sunflowers, ' objets d'art,' ' too-too ' costumes, and ' medievalism,' at the time when Whistler and William Morris were preaching their crusades and Oscar Wilde is said to have walked down Piccadilly and the Haymarket with a lily in his hand. Although this craze has long since passed, " Patience " is still able to hold the stage.

ACT I

Exterior of Castle Bunthorne. By the drawbridge over the moat the Lady Angela and the Lady Saphir, with the Lady Ella, all robed in æsthetic draperies, are sighing out their

hopeless love for the æsthetic poet, Reginald Bunthorne, when the Lady Jane—a somewhat riper lady than the others—warns them that it is the village milkmaid, Patience, whom he loves. Patience, however, does not know what love is, but thinks it cannot be much, since it seems to bring such depression on those who feel it. She informs the ladies that the Dragoon Guards, to whom they were engaged a year ago, are in the neighbourhood. Protesting that lately their tastes have been etherealized beyond Dragoons, they go off to carol Bunthorne, and the officers of the Dragoons, very commonplace men, the most commonplace among them being the Duke of Dunstable, come in singing lustily. They are presently astonished at seeing the moody, ill-tempered, æsthetic Bunthorne composing a poem, and followed by the ladies playing on harps; but not more astonished than chagrined when they find themselves ignored. Bunthorne finishes his poem, and after Patience has timidly requested him to read it does so. The composition, *Oh, Hollow, Hollow, Hollow!* evokes a pæan of praise from the ladies, who spurn the officers as being neither Della Cruscan nor Early English—certainly not Empyrean. They even criticize their unæsthetic uniform, which the officers had imagined would captivate every female heart. The soldiers having angrily departed, Bunthorne, left alone, tears aside the mask and confesses that he is not as æsthetic as he seems; all he does is born of a morbid love of admiration. Seeing Patience approaching, he makes love to her; but Patience assures him she has never loved "but her great-aunt," and couldn't possibly love him. Later, however, when Bunthorne has gone, she confides in Lady Angela that when she was a baby of four she did love a baby boy of rare beauty a year older. Angela begs her to try to love, for love is an ennobling passion, the one unselfish emotion in a whirlpool of grasping greed. Patience perceives it is her duty to love, and when Archibald Grosvenor, beautiful and universally attractive, appears, introducing himself as her baby-boy playmate of fifteen years ago, she acknowledges that she knows at last what love is. Then she recoils; for since he is perfection, her love for him cannot be the unselfish emotion that Lady Angela has described, and therefore, though he may go on loving her, it is her duty to leave him. They part despairingly. Bunthorne reappears on the scene with the ladies, his solicitor

having advised him to raffle himself. The ladies all take tickets, in spite of the pleadings of the Dragoons, but Patience suddenly enters. She has realized that it would be unselfish indeed to marry *him*, so she offers herself to him; Bunthorne embraces her, while the ladies speedily restore their affections to the Dragoons until Grosvenor comes in, and by his æsthetic beauty immediately captivates them all. Bunthorne, recognizing a rival, is furious, but Grosvenor recoils in horror from the admiration he has aroused.

ACT II

A Glade. Jane, singing to the violoncello, warns the absent Bunthorne not to delay too long if he would win her, as her charms are already over-ripe. Presently Grosvenor enters reading, bewailing his attraction for the ladies still following him. He assures them that his heart is fixed elsewhere, and as they dejectedly go greets Patience, who has come to make sure that he still loves her, though she must be Bunthorne's and can never be his. She again bids him adieu and bursts into tears as he departs, informing Bunthorne, who enters followed by Jane, that it is Grosvenor she loves. Bunthorne is furious at the fascination his rival has for all those who were formerly fascinated by *him*. Only Jane is faithful; and to her Bunthorne declares that he must be "too highly spiced," but he will be as insipid as Grosvenor. Meanwhile the Officers of the Dragoons have decided to turn æsthetes to win their ladies, and they appear dressed in suitable robes and strike cramping medieval attitudes. Angela and Saphir are charmed, and dance in turn with the Major, the Colonel, and the Duke. The only difficulty is, since there are three gentlemen and two ladies, who is to have which? After they have withdrawn Bunthorne and his rival come to an arrangement. Since Bunthorne wants the ladies' admiration and Grosvenor loathes it the latter must appear as a commonplace young man. Grosvenor vehemently objects, but under threat of being cursed by Bunthorne if he does not submit gives in at last. Bunthorne, having now committed his last act of ill-nature, is a changed character. The change, however, brings a result he has not foreseen. Patience now sees that *he* is the perfect being, and that it will no longer

be unselfish to love him; the commonplace Grosvenor, whom she sees drawing near dressed as an ordinary young man, is now so far from perfect that to love *him* will be the unselfish act. She accordingly throws herself into his arms, while the ladies, who have decided that since Archibald the All-Right has discarded æstheticism æstheticism ought to be discarded, turn their backs on Bunthorne and their eyes on the soldiers—all except Jane. The Duke, however, thinks he ought to leave the lovelier ladies, who already have all that is necessary to make a woman happy, and choose the only one among them who is distinctly plain, so he offers Jane his hand, which she eagerly accepts. Saphir pairs off with the Colonel, Angela with the Major, Ella with the Solicitor; and Bunthorne is left alone, gazing only at the lily which he holds in his hand.

IOLANTHE ; OR, THE PEER AND THE PERI

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, November 25, 1882.

SCENE : England.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

THE LORD CHANCELLOR.
EARL OF MOUNTARARAT.
EARL TOLLOLLER.
PRIVATE WILLIS, *of the Grenadier Guards.*
STREPHON, *an Arcadian shepherd.*
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.
IOLANTHE, *a fairy, Strephon's mother.*
CELIA, LEILA, FLETA } *fairies.*
PHYLLIS, *an Arcadian shepherdess and Ward in Chancery.*

Chorus of Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, and Fairies.

ARGUMENT

Gilbert's satire here is lightly directed against the House of Lords, certain members of that ancient and noble institution becoming so mixed up in the doings of the fairy world that they are glad at last to leave the practical—not to say intellectual—world of Westminster and take wing for Fairyland.

ACT I

An Arcadian Landscape. The fairies Leila, Celia, and Fleta mourn the fate of the fairy Iolanthe, who married a mortal and should, by fairy law, have died ; but the Queen, who loved her, commuted her sentence to penal servitude for life. The fairies plead with the Queen to give her back to them, and she at last consents. A fairy invocation recalls the erring Iolanthe, who

confesses that she has a son, Strephon, aged twenty-four, by her mortal husband; the youth is fairy down to the waist, but his legs are mortal. Strephon enters, singing and dancing and playing on the flageolet, and tells his mother that he is in love with Phyllis, a Ward of Chancery, and although the Lord Chancellor has not given his consent to the marriage he means to wed her. Iolanthe introduces him to the other fairies, and the Queen urges him to seek an intellectual sphere of action—how about going into Parliament? Strephon's objection that his fairy half would be Tory while his legs were Radical is overruled, as he can be returned as a Liberal-Unionist. Bidding him call on them if he is ever in trouble, the fairies depart, and Strephon turns to Phyllis, who enters confessing her fear of marrying without the Lord Chancellor's consent; cannot Strephon wait two more years? Strephon reminds her that since half the House of Lords is sighing for her love it might be dangerous, and they lovingly go off together as a procession of Peers comes marching in. The Lord Chancellor laments the fact that he is always giving his pretty young wards in marriage and never has one for himself. For instance, he now has to give Phyllis to one of the many peers who have asked for her, when he too loves her—but how can he give his own consent to his own marriage with his own ward? However, he has sent for Phyllis to choose herself, and she appears, and to their horror informs them that she loves—Strephon, who bursts in as she speaks, claiming her. The Lord Chancellor separates them, orders Phyllis off, and forbids the marriage. Iolanthe finds her son in tears, and while she is comforting him Phyllis, Lord Mountararat, and Lord Tolloller enter, and immediately imagine Strephon is making love to Iolanthe; nor will Phyllis believe Strephon when he tells her that this lady who looks no more than seventeen is, in fact, his mother. Iolanthe veils herself as the Lord Chancellor appears, and escapes unnoticed; and Phyllis, in her resentment, announces that she will marry either Lord Mountararat or Tolloller—she doesn't care which. Strephon invokes the aid of the fairies. They appear; the Lord Chancellor unceremoniously bids the Queen "Go away!" and she vows vengeance: Strephon shall go into Parliament, and every Bill he proposes shall be passed by both Houses, and one of them shall be that a man shall become a duke by competitive

examination. The Peers, seeing that henceforth the House of Lords will be composed of men with brains, beg for mercy, but in vain.

ACT II

Palace Yard, Westminster. The fairies are rejoicing at Strephon's success as an M.P. The Peers, on the other hand, are enraged —for his Bill to throw the Peerage open to Competitive Examination is receiving its second reading. Celia confesses that the fairies are influencing members to vote just as Strephon wishes. Lord Mountararat objects that in the good old days when the House of Peers " made no pretence to intellectual eminence " Britain did very well. The fairies, meanwhile, are beginning to cast amorous eyes on the Peers. They say they can't stop Strephon now, but beg the Peers not to go ! The Queen upbraids them, and urges them to show more self-control ; why, *she* is in love with that sentry there (who, at her invitation, introduces himself as Private Willis, of the Grenadier Guards), but she tramples on her love. As she and the other fairies go out Phyllis enters ; although engaged to two noblemen at once she is unhappy. The two noblemen in question follow her, imploring her to choose between them. She protests her indifference, and they argue with each other. The love-sick Lord Chancellor then appears in despair, and after he goes, in worse despair, it is Strephon's turn to exhibit his melancholy. He wildly calls on Phyllis—she answers his call, and when she taunts him he confesses that his mother is a fairy (thus accounting for her seventeen-year-old appearance). All is explained, and he and Phyllis embrace once more. Iolanthe congratulates them, and Strephon begs her to secure the Lord Chancellor's consent to their marriage. She is much agitated ; confesses that he is her husband and Strephon's father, that he believes she died childless, and under penalty of death she is bound not to undeceive him. But when he enters she veils herself and supplicates him—in vain ; for the Lord Chancellor has now determined that Phyllis shall be his bride. In horror Iolanthe then tells him his wife is still living, and reveals herself ; and amid an immediate wailing of fairy lamentation the Queen enters, vowing Iolanthe must die. " Then so must we ! " cry all the other fairies ; for

overcome by the charms of the other Peers, they have married them. The Lord Chancellor's legal mind soon offers a suggestion. Insert one word in the fairy law, and let it stand "Every fairy who *doesn't* marry a mortal shall die," and they are out of the difficulty at once. The Queen alters the law, and to save her own life offers herself to Private Willis, whom she turns into a fairy. The fairies implore the Peers to join their ranks, and since, as Lord Mountararat reminds them, Peers are to be recruited in future from persons of intelligence, and they are accordingly of no further use at Westminster, they agree to exchange the House of Peers for the House of Peris; wings spring from their shoulders, and away everybody flies to Fairyland.

PRINCESS IDA ; OR, CASTLE ADAMANT

Comic Opera in Three Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, January 5, 1884.

SCENE : An Imaginary Romantic Land.

TIME : In the Past.

CHARACTERS

KING HILDEBRAND.
HILARION, *his son.*
CYRIL, FLORIAN } *Hilarion's friends.*
KING GAMA.
ARAC, GURON, SCYNTHIUS } *his sons.*
PRINCESS IDA, *Gama's daughter.*
LADY BLANCHE, *Professor of Abstruct Science.*
LADY PSYCHE, *Professor of Humanities.*
MELISSA, *Lady Blanche's daughter.*
SACHARISSA, CHLOE, ADA } *girl graduates.*

Soldiers, Courtiers, "Girl Graduates," "Daughters of the Plough," etc.

ARGUMENT

This play is a revised and improved version of a light play or fantasia which Gilbert had written some time previously, and which he had then described as a "respectful perversion of Mr Tennyson's exquisite poem" ("The Princess"). Owing to its now outmoded theme—the undesirability of the higher education of women—it has "dated" more than the others, but the subject is treated so lightly, and with such wit, that it is still popular whenever it is revived.

ACT I

A Pavilion attached to King Hildebrand's Palace. Soldiers, courtiers, and Cyril and Florian, friends of Prince Hilarion, are

looking out for the coming of King Gama with his daughter Ida, to whom Hilarion was betrothed when both were infants. King Hildebrand, Hilarion's father, vows that if Gama fails to bring the Princess there will be war between them, and, he adds, as Gama appears in the distance, a dungeon for the king. Hilarion mentions that he has heard that Princess Ida has foresworn the company of men and shut herself up with a band of women in pursuit of learning. Scarcely has he spoken when Gama's three sons, Arac, Guron, and Scynthius enter—more brawn than brain, thirsting for a fight, the rougher the better. They are followed by Gama himself, a cynically morose individual who always tries to make himself as pleasant as he can, yet everybody says he is a disagreeable man—and he can't think why! After bandying words with Cyril he informs the King that his daughter now rules a woman's university. There are no males within those walls; the hearts of the ladies therein are dead to men. Hildebrand bids Hilarion go and tell the Princess that if she does not keep her vows he will come and storm her citadel, and Gama and his sons shall be kept as hostages for the Prince. Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian resolve to try their hand at storming the ladies' bowers with expressive glances and "scented showers of fairest flowers."

ACT II

The Gardens of Castle Adamant. Lady Psyche, Professor of Humanities, is lecturing to a group of girl graduates. The Lady Blanche, Professor of Abstract Science, tells them that Sacharissa has been expelled for bringing in a set of chess*men*, and Chloe is to lose three terms for drawing a perambulator in her sketch-book. Princess Ida then preaches a sermon on the superiority of Woman over Man, to which all listen attentively; but when she and the maidens depart it is apparent from Lady Blanche's soliloquy that *she* wishes to rule in the Princess's stead. As soon as she has left the scene Hilarion and his two friends creep in, having braved prickly cactus, stinging nettles, broken bottles, bull-dogs, and spring guns to get there; they find some collegiate robes and put them on, disguising themselves as women. The Princess comes upon them in this guise, and at their request admits them to her university, not dreaming their real sex.

But after she has gone Florian sees that the approaching Psyche is his sister, who is bound to recognize him. They reveal themselves to her and throw themselves on her mercy. Melissa, Blanche's daughter, overhears all, and looks with pleasurable wonder on these strange phenomena—young men—who appear much more lovely than she had been led to expect. Psyche too (who has been watching Cyril) confesses that her faith in Ida's views is somewhat shaken. Melissa is so overcome with self-conscious confusion when her mother enters and looks towards the " new students " as they depart that Blanche's suspicions are aroused ; she finds a cigar-case that they have dropped and the truth is out. Reminded, however, that Hilarion has come to carry off her rival, Ida, she consents to " wink at it." She is not required, however, to wink for long. At luncheon Cyril, becoming tipsy, reveals the truth to the horrified ladies, and though Hilarion leaps in and saves the Princess as she loses her balance and falls into a stream, Ida commands him and his associates to be bound and led away. Just at this moment Melissa announces an armed band outside demanding admittance for Hildebrand ; even as she speaks the gate crashes in, and Hildebrand enters, accompanied by soldiers and Ida's brothers, handcuffed. The King swears that if she does not release Hilarion and marry him he will raze her castle to the ground. Her brothers add that the King will also kill them ; notwithstanding, the Princess insists on hurling defiance at the raging monarch.

ACT III

Outer Walls and Courtyard of Castle Adamant. The ladies appear, valiantly waving battle-axes, but are not in their hearts so doughty as they appear, and when the Princess urges them to fight one by one they all begin to make excuse. She is bitterly disillusioned, and, hearing Chloe announcing that Gama and her brothers are ready to fight for her, she allows them to come in. Gama has been brought to capitulation by torture—he has been so treated in Hildebrand's kingdom that he has found nothing to grumble at, and it has worn him out. He bursts into tears, and, seeing his suffering, Ida relents, and allows Hildebrand's soldiers to enter while she commands the girls

to mount the battlements. Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian are led in, and the Princess's three brothers engage to fight them. There is a desperate struggle, in which Arac, Guron, and Scynthius are wounded. The sight of them lying bleeding is too much for the Princess. She yields, giving up her place to Blanche, and abandoning her cherished dream of having all Posterity bow at her exalted name. Hildebrand reminds her that if she had made all women abjure tyrannic Man it would have been difficult to provide the Posterity to bow: an idea which the Princess confesses had not occurred to her. Hilarion urges her, since Woman, in whom she put her trust, has failed her, to try Man. Psyche has already paired off with Cyril, and Melissa with Florian; and now the Princess gives in completely. "Take me!" she cries to Hilarion, "for indeed I love thee—come!"

THE MIKADO ; OR, THE TOWN OF TITIPU

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, March 14, 1885.

SCENE : A Japanese Town.

TIME : The Present.

CHARACTERS

THE MIKADO OF JAPAN.

NANKI-POO, *his son, disguised as a wandering minstrel, and in love with Yum-Yum.*

KO-KO, *Lord High Executioner of Titipu.*

POOH-BAH, *Lord High Everything Else.*

PISH-TUSH, *a noble lord.*

YUM-YUM, PITTI-SING, PEEP-BO } *three sisters—wards of Ko-Ko.*

KATISHA, *an elderly lady, in love with Nanki-Poo.*

Chorus of Schoolgirls, Nobles, Guards, and Coolies.

ARGUMENT

" The Mikado " has always been the most popular of all the Savoy Operas. When it was first produced it ran for two years in London, and was given five thousand consecutive performances in America ; and several of its lines—such as " he's got a little list " and " make the punishment fit the crime—" have now become almost a part of our current language.

ACT I

The Courtyard of a Palace in Titipu, belonging to Ko-Ko, a former cheap tailor, now the Lord High Executioner. Nanki-Poo, dressed as a minstrel, confides in the Japanese gentlemen seated there that a year ago he and Yum-Yum, one of Ko-Ko's wards, fell in love with each other, but, hearing that she was already betrothed to her guardian, he left the town in despair. He has now, however, heard that Ko-Ko has been condemned

to death for flirting, and has returned to find Yum-Yum. Pish-Tush, a noble lord, informs him that Ko-Ko has been taken from his prison and appointed Lord High Executioner to soften the sternness of the law decreeing capital punishment for flirting; for Ko-Ko had been next on the list for decapitation, and if they made him Headsman, why, "he could not cut off another's head until he'd cut his own off." Pooh-Bah, a particularly haughty and exclusive personage of pre-Adamite ancestral descent explains further that as he was the only one who did not refuse to serve (and receive a salary) under the ex-tailor he accepted all the posts of the resigning officers of State at once, and is now Lord High Everything except Executioner. He tells Nanki-Poo (for a consideration) that Yum-Yum and Ko-Ko are to be married that afternoon.

Presently Ko-Ko enters, all agog for his marriage, and Yum-Yum and her schoolfellows, among them Peep-Bo and Pitti-Sing, also Ko-Ko's wards, rush in chattering. They are intimidated and alarmed by the appearance of Pooh-Bah, but rush to Nanki-Poo. When he and Yum-Yum are at last left alone Nanki-Poo tells her that he is really the disguised son of the Mikado, who fled from Court because Katisha, an elderly lady there, had misconstrued his customary affability into expressions of affection and claimed him in marriage. When it seemed that he had been guilty of a mere flirtation the Mikado, a very Brutus, had ordered him to die. But now Yum-Yum is betrothed to Ko-Ko, what hope is left in life? They depart dejectedly. Pish-Tush, following Ko-Ko on to the scene, gives him a letter wherein the Mikado decrees that unless some one is beheaded within a month the post of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished. Ko-Ko is informed that he is the obvious victim, but tries to persuade Pooh-Bah to be his substitute. He is just lamenting his lack of success when Nanki-Poo enters, prepared to hang himself. Ko-Ko strikes a bargain with him. He shall marry Yum-Yum on condition that he allows himself to be executed at the end of a month. There are general rejoicings when this scheme is disclosed, in the midst of which Katisha, an intense and tragic contralto, dashes in, recognizes Nanki-Poo, and is only stopped from proclaiming his real identity by a torrent of Japanese words from Nanki-Poo, Yum-Yum, and the chorus, which drown her voice.

ACT II

Ko-Ko's Garden. Yum-Yum is preparing for her wedding very happily until Peep-Bo and Pitti-Sing remind her of her bridegroom's impending execution. She bursts into tears, and has to be comforted by Nanki-Poo. But worse is to come. Ko-Ko now remembers that under the Mikado's law when a married man is beheaded his wife is buried alive. Yum-Yum's ardour begins to cool, when Pooh-Bah announces the approach of the Mikado. " He's coming to see whether his orders have been carried out ! " cries Ko-Ko agitatedly. " Very well, then," replies Nanki-Poo, " behead me—at once ! " It then turns out that the tender-hearted Ko-Ko cannot kill so much as a blue-bottle ; but he has a brilliant idea. He persuades Pooh-Bah (for a consideration) to draw up an affidavit saying that the deed has been done, and then orders Nanki-Poo to go off and marry Yum-Yum and never come back any more. He hustles them off just as the Mikado, accompanied by Katisha, arrives, and with the aid of Pooh-Bah and Pitti-Sing gives a graphic and colourful description of the execution which is supposed to have taken place. The Mikado graciously listens, but when the account is finished explains that, although this is all very interesting, he has really come to say that he has heard that his wandering son has been masquerading as a musician in the town, and he would like him produced. Katisha, who has meanwhile been reading the certificate of death, exclaims, " Ha ! " and reveals that Ko-Ko has beheaded the heir to the throne. The Mikado fancies that the punishment for that is " something lingering, with boiling oil in it." Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, and Pitti-Sing grovel on the ground in abject terror, and, left alone, are beginning to blame each other for this state of affairs when Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum enter, now married. Ko-Ko begs Nanki-Poo to reveal himself and prove that he has not been executed, but he objects, on the ground that as he can't marry Katisha now he will be put to death, and his wife will be buried alive. Still, he has an idea. Let Ko-Ko marry Katisha, and that will end the difficulty. Ko-Ko recoils in horror, but when Nanki-Poo threatens to be a ' disembodied spirit ' so long as Katisha is single he is forced to yield and at the first opportunity, which is not long in coming, offers himself

to Katisha, and after a little pleading is accepted. Accordingly when the Mikado, having had a capital lunch, enters ready for the punishment of the three criminals, Katisha implores him to show them mercy, stating that she has just married Ko-Ko. Moreover, as Nanki-Poo, entering with Yum-Yum, announces, the Heir-Apparent is not slain after all. Ko-Ko explains the apparently inexplicable. When a Mikado says, "Let a thing be done," practically it *is* done: his Majesty says, "Kill a gentleman," and consequently that gentleman is as good as dead—so why not say so? The Mikado agrees that nothing could possibly be more satisfactory. "The threatened cloud has passed away," and the scene ends in general rejoicings.

RUDDIGORE ; OR, THE WITCH'S CURSE

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, January 22, 1887.

SCENE : Cornwall.

TIME : Early in the Nineteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

SIR RUTHVEN MURGATROYD, *disguised as Robin Oakapple, a young farmer.*
RICHARD DAUNTLESS, *his foster-brother—a man-o'-war's man.*
SIR DESPARD MURGATROYD, *of Ruddigore, a wicked baronet.*
OLD ADAM GOODHEART, *Robin's faithful servant.*
ROSE MAYBUD, *a village maiden.*
MAD MARGARET.
DAME HANNAH, *Rose's aunt.*
ZORAH, RUTH } *professional bridesmaids.*

GHOSTS

SIR RUPERT MURGATROYD, *the First Baronet.*
SIR JASPER MURGATROYD, *the Third Baronet.*
SIR LIONEL MURGATROYD, *the Sixth Baronet.*
SIR CONRAD MURGATROYD, *the Twelfth Baronet.*
SIR DESMOND MURGATROYD, *the Sixteenth Baronet.*
SIR GILBERT MURGATROYD, *the Eighteenth Baronet.*
SIR MERVYN MURGATROYD, *the Twentieth Baronet.*
SIR RODERIC MURGATROYD, *the Twenty-first Baronet.*

Chorus of Officers, Ancestors, Professional Bridesmaids, and Villagers.

ARGUMENT

This tale of a curse that forced a naturally virtuous race to commit one crime a day, until one of the line at last hit upon an ingenious way out of the difficulty, suffered unaccountable neglect until it was revived shortly after the first World War and proved to have drawing powers second only to those of "The Gondoliers" and "The Mikado."

ACT I

The Cornish Fishing Village of Rederring. The chorus of professional bridesmaids is lamenting that Rose Maybud, the village belle, does not get married, when Dame Hannah, her aunt, enters, and they immediately ask her if *she* won't marry some one to save them from being disendowed. Hannah confesses that she once loved a god-like youth, but when she discovered on their wedding-day that he was no other than Sir Roderic Murgatroyd of Ruddigore (uncle of the man who now bears that title) she left him. She goes on to explain that there has been a curse upon the line of Murgatroyd ever since Sir Rupert, the first baronet, roasted a witch on the village green, and the hag screamed out that each lord of Ruddigore should commit one crime a day or die in torment. As she finishes her tale Rose enters, her etiquette book in hand. Hannah urges her to choose a husband from the many village lads who sigh for her—young Robin Oakapple, for instance. But Rose, repeatedly consulting her book, fears it would be contrary to etiquette for her to do anything in the matter. Accordingly, an interview shortly after with the bashful Robin is fruitless, and old Adam, Robin's faithful servant, enters to find him despondent. He addresses him by his real name—Sir Roderic Murgatroyd—but Robin implores him to hush; twenty years ago, in horror at the prospect of inheriting that title and its curse, he concealed himself in this village under the name of Robin Oakapple, leaving his younger brother, Despard, to become the baronet. Adam has really come to say that Robin's foster-brother, the sailor Richard, is at hand. Richard enters, describes with much gusto a highly nautical experience his ship has had with a French frigate, and greets Robin boisterously. On hearing his trouble he urges him to speak up for himself—away with modesty! and offers at last to speak on his behalf. But when Rose appears his susceptible heart is so overcome that he proposes to her himself, and Rose, after due consultation of the etiquette book, accepts him. Robin, returning, discovers what has happened, but has not much difficulty in winning Rose to himself after all.

Mad Margaret, clad in picturesque tatters, now appears on the scene. She is convinced that the bad Sir Despard, who trifled

with her affections but whom she still loves, is determined to make Rose his. Rose assures her, however, that she is pledged to another.

At this point the Bridesmaids enter with a chorus of bucks and blades; but as Sir Despard follows the girls flee from him in horror. He then confesses that really his heart is like an innocent child's; he polishes off his daily crime first thing in the morning, and spends the rest of the day doing good to atone for it. While he soliloquizes Richard approaches, and by way of getting his own back reveals that Sir Ruthven is alive in the person of Robin. Sir Despard is overjoyed—now he can transfer the title and its curse to his elder brother! He comes upon Robin and Rose just as they are about to marry; Robin cannot deny that he should really be the wicked baronet; Rose therefore bids him farewell, and Sir Despard, now that he is a virtuous person, realizes that he must keep his vows to Margaret, and offers her his hand.

ACT II

The Picture Gallery in Ruddigore Castle a week later. Robin appears, wearing the haggard aspect of the guilty roué, with Adam as his wicked steward. Robin is finding it hard to commit his daily crime, but when Rose and Richard enter sees his opportunity and threatens to immure her in a dungeon. He is foiled by Richard, who holds a Union Jack over her head, and, moved by her pleading, he lets Richard take her off. Robin turns to the portraits of his ancestors and bids them show mercy on him. The gallery darkens, and all the pictures step from their frames, reviling him as a coward, poltroon, etc., etc. The ghost of Sir Roderic warns him that he cannot escape his fate; it is the duty of all the ancestors to see that their successors are conscientiously committing their crimes, and Robin is evading the conditions under which he is permitted to exist. He exhorts him to commit more robust crimes than making false income-tax returns, a thing which everybody does! Why does he not, for instance, carry off a lady? Robin rebels, and immediately Sir Roderic orders the agonies to begin. After writhing in torture for a while Robin is forced to submit, the ghosts return to their frames, and Robin sends off Adam to the village to carry off a maiden—any maiden, he doesn't care which.

Upon their departure the reformed Despard and Margaret appear, clad in sober black and bent on good works—in fact, Margaret is a District Visitor, and easily recalled from her tendency to relapse into melodrama or hysterics by the utterance of the warning word, " Basingstoke." They have come to urge Robin to abandon his evil courses and repent of all the crimes which, as baronet of Ruddigore—a title which, in the eye of the law, he has held for the last ten years—he has committed in that time. This makes Robin declare that he will defy his ancestors, and by courting death, atone for his infamous career. At this point Adam drags in an indignant Hannah, whom he has carried off as required. Hannah seizes a dagger from one of the suits of armour, throws Robin a small one she was carrying before, and offers to fight. In terror Robin calls on Sir Roderic to help him. That gentleman steps down from his picture, recognizes Hannah, and testily rates Robin for having her carried off. But after a short exit Robin rushes back excitedly. Since every Murgatroyd who refuses to commit a crime a day must die, is it not tantamount to suicide to refuse to commit that crime? And is not suicide itself a crime? So Roderic ought never to have died at all, and is practically alive, and he, Robin, is free to live a blameless life!

At this solution of the problem Rose rushes into his arms, and with Richard's confession that he has taken Zorah, the Bridesmaid, " for his missus," and the decision of Despard and Margaret to settle away from this scene of sin and sorrow in Basingstoke, the play ends to the satisfaction of every one concerned.

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD; OR, THE MERRYMAN AND HIS MAID

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, October 3, 1888.

SCENE: Tower Green.

TIME: The Sixteenth Century.

CHARACTERS

SIR RICHARD CHOLMONDELEY, *Lieutenant of the Tower.*
COLONEL FAIRFAX, *under sentence of death.*
SERGEANT MERYLL, *of the Yeoman of the Guard.*
LEONARD MERYLL, *his son.*
JACK POINT, *a strolling jester.*
WILFRED SHADBOLT, *head jailer and assistant tormentor.*
THE HEADSMAN.
FIRST YEOMAN.
SECOND YEOMAN.
FIRST CITIZEN.
SECOND CITIZEN.
ELSIE MAYNARD, *a strolling singer.*
PHOEBE MERYLL, *Sergeant's Meryll's daughter.*
DAME CARRUTHERS, *housekeeper to the Tower.*
KATE, *her niece.*

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard, Gentlemen, Citizens, etc.

ARGUMENT

In "The Yeomen of the Guard" Gilbert almost forsakes farce for straight comedy. In Jack Point, the wandering jester who gives up his love, temporarily, as he thinks, discovering afterwards that it is for ever, the librettist has created a character who demands real sympathy; he is possibly the most attractive of all Gilbertian figures, certainly the one who approaches most nearly to real life.

ACT I

Phoebe Meryll, daughter of Sergeant Meryll, of the Yeomen of the Guard, is sighing as she sits at her spinning-wheel, because

Colonel Fairfax, a handsome young soldier, is under sentence of death in the Tower for sorcery. The Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor, Wilfred Shadbolt, who is in love with Phoebe, begins to be jealous as he sees her grief. It soon appears, however, that Phoebe is not alone in her sorrow, for her father, whose life Fairfax has twice saved, is equally disturbed, and hopes that his gallant son, Leonard, who as a reward for his bravery has been appointed a Yeoman of the Guard, will bring a reprieve for him from Court. While Sergeant Meryll is talking of his son Leonard himself appears, but without the reprieve, though he would have given his life to save Fairfax's. His father then has an inspiration. Let Leonard lie hidden for a space, and allow Fairfax to impersonate him. The only difficulty is to get access to Fairfax's cell, of which Shadbolt holds the key, to release him; but Phoebe promises to see to that. Just as they have made this arrangement Fairfax is brought in, guarded, on his way from the Beauchamp to the Cold Harbour Tower to await his end there in solitude. Phoebe weeps at the sight, and is led off by her father, and then Fairfax explains to the Lieutenant of the Tower, an old friend of his, that it is his kinsman who has had him charged with sorcery, so that he might succeed to his estate, which devolves on him provided Fairfax dies unmarried. Fairfax, however, intends to outwit him, and begs the Lieutenant to bribe some maiden, no matter whom, to marry him, with the promise of a hundred crowns. The Lieutenant doubtfully agrees to do his best. Fairfax is led away, and Jack Point, the merryman, and Elsie Maynard, a wandering singer, pursued by a crowd of men and women, run in. They are entertaining the crowd, who repay them in rather sorry wise, when the Lieutenant enters again, clears away the mob, and listens attentively as Point tells him that Elsie's mother is ill, and they have come with their quips and cranks and jests to get money to cure her. The Lieutenant now eagerly explains Fairfax's offer to Elsie. The money is a temptation; after they have been assured that Fairfax is to die almost immediately both Elsie and Point, to whom she is half betrothed, consent to her marrying the doomed man. Wilfred blindfolds Elsie and leads her off, while Point gives the Lieutenant, whose service he wishes to enter, some samples of his wit. Elsie meanwhile, blindfolded throughout the ceremony,

so that she has no idea what her husband looks like, is married to Fairfax, who is so distracted he scarcely notices who is becoming his wife ; while Phoebe, outside, wheedles Wilfred so artfully that she is able to abstract the keys from his belt and return them after her father has unlocked Fairfax's cell and released him, without Wilfred being any the wiser. Meryll meets Fairfax, his beard and moustache shaved off, dressed in the uniform of the Yeomen of the Guard which he has managed to convey to him, and instructs him to parade as Leonard Meryll with the other Yeomen. The crowd now gathers for the execution, but Fairfax (as Leonard) and two other Yeomen, who have gone to fetch the prisoner, rush back exclaiming that he is no longer in his cell, and must have escaped. Point is horrified ; and Elsie, equally aghast, little knowing he is her husband, faints in Fairfax's arms.

ACT II

Tower Green by Moonlight, two days later. Jack Point, now the Lieutenant's jester, but mourning at the loss of Elsie, meets the equally dismal Wilfred, and promises to make the jailer a jester if he will swear that he shot the escaping Fairfax and killed him. Wilfred consents, and they go off to put their plan into execution. Fairfax, still masquerading as Leonard, meets Sergeant Meryll and inquires how Elsie does ; he hears that, thanks to the nursing of Dame Carruthers, housekeeper of the Tower, she has recovered. He is wondering who it could have been that he married when Dame Carruthers, by recounting Elsie's delirious ramblings, reveals the truth. Elsie, of course, thinks Fairfax is young Meryll ; she has fallen in love with him, but, not dreaming he is her husband, tries to stop him when, on her entrance, he begins making love to her. His love-making is interrupted by the sound of an arquebus-shot, and Wilfred and Point rush in, and between them give a lively account of how Wilfred shot Fairfax as he was escaping by swimming across the river. Point then tells Elsie that as she is now free to marry again he is the obvious choice ; but Fairfax, declaring that the jester " knows not how to woo " proceeds to give him so lifelike a lesson that both Point and Phoebe grow alarmed. Phoebe begins to weep, and when Wilfred taunts

her, before she realizes what she is saying, forgetting that the Yeoman who has been making love to Elsie is supposed to be her brother, confesses that she is weeping because he is to marry Elsie. Wilfred then suddenly realizes who this " brother " is ; and in horror, to save the secret, Phoebe promises to marry him if he will only keep quiet. Almost immediately the real Leonard enters with the reprieve, which has been delayed by Fairfax's scheming kinsman ; he is followed by the overjoyed Sergeant Meryll and Dame Carruthers, but suddenly realizing his complicity in Fairfax's escape, and that Dame Carruthers could reveal it and make " three heads besides his roll from their shoulders," the Sergeant follows Phoebe's example and bribes the dame with an offer of marriage. The crowd begins to assemble again ; the Lieutenant of the Tower brings Elsie news that her husband lives and is free. She recoils, for she knows her love for the supposed Leonard ; but when Fairfax enters, recognizes him and joyfully flies to him, dropping, nevertheless, one tear " at the moan of the merryman moping mum," poor Jack Point, who, as Fairfax embraces his wife, falls insensible at their feet.

THE GONDOLIERS; OR, THE KING OF BARATARIA

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, December 7, 1889.

SCENE: Venice and Barataria.

TIME: 1750.

CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO, *a Grandee of Spain.*
LUIZ, *his attendant.*
DON ALHAMBRA DEL BOLERO, *the Grand Inquisitor.*
MARCO PALMIERI, GUISEPPE PALMIERI, ANTONIO, FRANCESCO, GIORGIO, ANNIBALE — *Venetian gondoliers.*
THE DUCHESS OF PLAZA-TORO.
CASILDA, *her daughter.*
GIANETTA, TESSA, FIAMETTA, VITTORIA, GIULIA — *Contadine.*
INEZ, *the King's foster-mother.*

Chorus of Gondoliers, Contadine, Men-at-arms, Heralds, and Pages.

ARGUMENT

"The Gondoliers" contains some of the most tuneful of all Sullivan's songs, and at the same time exhibits Gilbert's ingenuity at its happiest. The complicated situation arising out of a prince muddled in his babyhood with a commoner, and married in infancy to a lady who, when grown up, loves another, would appear to be a hopeless one, but it is smoothed out in characteristic Gilbertian fashion.

The Duke reproaches the joint kings with their lack of royal manners, and endeavours to give them a lesson in court etiquette; but after he and the Duchess have gone Casilda confesses to them that she is in love with somebody else, and they confess they have recently married Tessa and Gianetta—altogether a hopeless complication! But just at that moment Don Alhambra returns with Inez, the old nurse, who tells an astounding story: the prince was long ago entrusted by the king to her care, and when traitors came to steal him she substituted her own son; the villains fell into the trap, took off her son to Venice, thinking him to be the prince, and left the real prince for her to hide away; she called him her son, Luiz—but it was he who was the heir!

Luiz, amid a sensation, now ascends the throne, crowns his wife, Casilda, and at this satisfactory solution of several problems, the gondoliers, kneeling before the real king, express themselves as being, on the whole, delighted.

UTOPIA LIMITED; OR, THE FLOWERS OF PROGRESS

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, October 7, 1893.

SCENE: The Kingdom of Utopia.

TIME: The Present.

CHARACTERS

KING PARAMOUNT THE FIRST, *King of Utopia.*
SCAPHIO, PHANTIS } *judges of the Utopian Supreme Court.*
TARARA, *the public exploder.*
CALYNX, *the Utopian Vice-Chamberlain.*

Imported Flowers of Progress

LORD DRAMALEIGH, *a British Lord Chamberlain.*
CAPTAIN FITZBATTLEAXE, *First Life Guards.*
CAPTAIN SIR EDWARD CORCORAN, K.C.B., *of the Royal Navy.*
MR GOLDBURY, *a Company Promoter; afterwards comptroller of the Utopian household.*
SIR BAILEY BARRE, K.C., M.P.
MR BLUSHINGTON, *of the County Council.*

THE PRINCESS ZARA, *eldest daughter of King Paramount.*
THE PRINCESS NEKAYA, THE PRINCESS KALYBA } *her younger sisters.*
THE LADY SOPHY, *their English gouvernante.*
SALATA, MELENE, PHYLLA } *Utopian maidens.*

ARGUMENT

In this satirical presentation of an imaginary land which sets out to gain prosperity by imitating the British Constitution and way of life Gilbert has a thrust at that very English institution, Party Government.

ACT I

A Utopian Palm Grove in the Gardens of King Paramount's Palace. Calynx, the Utopian Vice-Chamberlain, enters with the news that the King's eldest daughter, Zara, who has been studying in England, is returning, and bringing with her the secret of England's pre-eminent position, so that Utopia may hope soon to be completely Anglicized. At this moment Tarara, the Public Exploder, rushes in furiously with the *Palace Peeper*, a Society paper, which is full of tales of the King's indiscretions and immoralities. It is the business of two Wise Men who watch the King by night and day to report such lapses to the Public Exploder, whose duty it becomes in such a state of affairs to blow up His Majesty and rule in his stead ; but have they done so ? No ! As he speaks the two Wise Men, Scaphio and Phantis, enter ; and when they have been left alone Phantis confesses to Scaphio that he is in love with Zara. Scaphio reminds him that the King is in their power, and promises to help him.

The King, entering, now announces that the country is to be modelled upon England, and all gather round to see his two younger daughters, Nekaya and Kalyba, models of English young ladies, and to hear Lady Sophy, who has trained them, lecture upon the example they set of English feminine manners. When she has finished, and the King is alone, he calls in Scaphio and Phantis, and in the course of his conversation with them it appears that he himself, urged on by them, is the author of all the scurrilous tales in the *Palace Peeper*. The King, however, is beginning to rebel against their tyranny, especially when Lady Sophy, whom he loves, and who would love him if he were more respectable, approaches him with a copy of the *Palace Peeper* in her hand, asking him why he does not have the writers of these tales punished if, as he protests to her, they are all untrue.

Princess Zara now returns, escorted by four Troopers and Captain Fitzbattleaxe, an English Guardsman, with whom (as an aside shows) she is in love, and who loves her. Seeing the princess, the susceptible Scaphio also falls in love with her, to Phantis's extreme annoyance. Fitzbattleaxe arbitrates, however, saying that in England the rule in such a case is for the lady to

be entrusted to an officer of the Household Cavalry as a stakeholder till the rivals decide which shall blow out the brains of the other. They agree to this, but each whispers to the Guardsman that *he* may as well take the princess if his rival survives him.

Zara now tells her father that with a view to remodelling the political and social institutions of Utopia she has brought six representatives of the principal causes that have tended to make England what she is, and when all the Court is assembled these are introduced : Captain Fitzbattleaxe, emblematic of the Armed Forces ; Sir Bailey Barre, K.C., M.P., who can argue that black is white ; Lord Dramaleigh, a British Lord Chamberlain, who purifies the stage ; Mr. Blushington, a County Councillor ; Mr Goldbury, a Company Promoter ; and Captain Corcoran, of the Royal Navy : these are the Flowers of Progress. Mr Goldbury suggests that as Utopia is too big for one small head to manage it be floated as a " Company Limited," and in spite of the angry asides and threats of Scaphio, Phantis, and Tarara, the King agrees.

ACT II

Throne Room in the Palace—Night. Fitzbattleaxe is discovered making love to Zara. They talk over the reforms in an Anglicized Utopia. The King enters, dressed as a British Field-Marshal, and presently holds a Cabinet Council in the English style with the Flowers of Progress. The country has been Anglicized completely—divorce is nearly obsolete, shady dames have been " bowed out," the city has been beautified, the labour question has been solved, etc., etc. The meeting is followed by a Drawing Room also in the English style. Scaphio and Phantis burn with fury and fume with smothered rage ; they swear to each other that the King shall be once more beneath their thumb and the reforms that are ruining everything shall cease. The King merely directs them to formulate a list of their grievances and address it to the Secretary of Utopia Limited so that they may be laid before the next Board Meeting. He further reminds them that they may *wind* up a Limited Company, but cannot *blow* it up. At this defiance Phantis and Scaphio realize their helplessness and plot with Tarara to bring the people about their monarch's ears.

Nekaya and Kalyba, meanwhile, assured by Lord Dramaleigh and Mr Goldbury that their demureness is not so English as they have been led to believe, unbend a little, and dance off; but Lady Sophy's scruples are not so easily removed. She meditates upon her lost ideals—there *are* no spotless kings left! —and the King, overhearing, bursts out, "You love me!" She flourishes the *Palace Peeper* before him, warding him off; but he confesses himself the author of the *Peeper's* tales and claims her hand, which she gives him. Zara and her Guardsman, Nakaya and Kalyba with Lord Dramaleigh and Mr Goldbury, watch while they dance; and as they do so a crowd, urged on by the three conspirators, rushes in crying, "Down with them!" They shout that all the reforms in the English style have brought Utopia to ruin; the Sanitary laws are so drastic that all the doctors are starving, the remodelled laws have extinguished crime, and the lawyers are ruined; the reconstructed Army and Navy are so irresistible that all the neighbouring nations have disarmed, and war's impossible; Utopia, swamped by dull prosperity, demands that all the Flowers of Progress be sent about their business! Zara thinks something must have been omitted which is to be found in England—and suddenly remembers: PARTY GOVERNMENT! They agree to adopt it at once, and so put everything right. "Baffled!" mutters Phantis. The King orders him and Scaphio to be led off in custody; and with Paramount's wish that by degrees Utopia may acclimatize Britain's Parliamentary peculiarities the opera ends.

THE GRAND DUKE ; OR, THE STATUTORY DUEL

Comic Opera in Two Acts. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, March 7, 1896.

SCENE : The Grand Duchy of Pfennig Halbpfennig.

TIME : 1750.

CHARACTERS

RUDOLPH, *Grand Duke of Pfennig Halbpfennig.*
ERNEST DUMMKOPF, *a theatrical manager.*
LUDWIG, *his leading comedian.*
DR TANNHAUSER, *a notary.*
THE PRINCE OF MONTE CARLO.
VISCOUNT MENTONE.
BEN HASHBAZ, *a costumier.*
HERALD.
THE PRINCESS OF MONTE CARLO, *betrothed to Rudolph.*
THE BARONESS VON KRAKENFELDT, *betrothed to Rudolph.*
JULIA JELLICOE, *an English comedienne.*
LISA, *a soubrette.*
OLGA, GRETCHEN, BERTHA, ELSA, MARTHA — *members of Ernest Dummkopf's company.*

Chamberlains, Nobles, Actors, Actresses, etc.

ARGUMENT

Both "Utopia Limited" and "The Grand Duke" were written after Gilbert and Sullivan had composed the quarrel that had separated them for over three years, and they both lack something of the lightness and magic that characterize the earlier operas. It is perhaps for this reason that they are so infrequently seen on the stage nowadays.

ACT I

The Public Square of Speisesaal. The members of Ernest Dummkopf's theatrical company are enjoying a breakfast in

honour of the wedding of Ludwig the leading comedian, and Lisa a soubrette; although the couple presently appear unmarried because, as the Grand Duke Rudolph has called a convocation of the clergy to settle the details of *his* marriage with the wealthy Baroness von Krakenfeldt, they cannot find a parson. All murmur against the Grand Duke, but joyfully remember that they are conspiring to depose him, and elect Ernest in his stead. Ernest excitedly enters, proclaiming that if they vote solid for him he is sure to be elected, and since for ten years he has ruled a theatrical company he'll know how to rule a Grand Duchy. The company remind him that he has promised to give them all positions at Court in return for their votes.

Left alone, Ernest ponders upon his unrequited love for Julia Jellicoe, the English comedienne, and, seeing her approaching, is on the point of renewing his suit when she announces that if all in his company are to be given posts about the Court according to their professional importance, she, as leading lady, must play the chief part—his Grand Duchess. Ernest is overjoyed, but they are interrupted by the return of the company, exclaiming that Ludwig has unwittingly revealed the plot to the Grand Duke's detective. The Notary, however, thinks of a way out. Ernest and Ludwig must fight a Statutory Duel—the law which introduced such Duels will, like all the laws of the Duchy, die a natural death at the end of a century, but they are just in time, for this law expires to-morrow. When taking part in a Statutory Duel the two antagonists draw a playing-card, and he who draws the lowest is considered legally dead, and the survivor takes over all his obligations. In this case, whichever is the survivor, Ernest or Ludwig, goes to the Grand Duke and announces the 'dead' man as the moving spirit of the plot, receives a pardon, and when the law expires the next day the 'dead' man will resume all his obligations as if nothing had happened; for as he can only die once, and has already 'died,' he cannot be arrested on the informer's evidence and killed again.

Ernest and Ludwig draw cards; Ernest draws the King, Ludwig the Ace, so Ernest 'dies,' and Ludwig goes off to reveal the plot. The Grand Duke, a shabby miser, has been making love in the market-place to the Baroness von Krakenfeldt, and on

her exit has just read his detective's report of the plot to depose him ; he is sobbing at the news when Ludwig comes upon him. On hearing what the matter is Ludwig has an inspiration, and instead of turning king's evidence suggests that if the Grand Duke wishes to escape from the catastrophe why does he not resort to a Statutory Duel ? He fights, he loses, he is dead for a day, and to-morrow, when the Act expires, he comes to life again, while the survivor will have borne the brunt of the popular explosion. Ludwig offers to be the survivor, and they arrange that Rudolph shall draw the King, Ludwig himself the Ace. They stage a violent quarrel in front of the populace, 'fight' the duel, the Duke loses, and retires amid general ridicule, vowing vengeance when he returns on the morrow. But Ludwig, who, as survivor, now takes over the responsibilities of the 'dead' Duke, has arranged for that. His first act as Grand Duke is to renew the Act for another hundred years.

He is giving out Court appointments to the Company when Julia appears, claiming the leading part—the Grand Duchess. The supplanted Lisa weeps, but Julia carries her point.

ACT II

Entrance Hall of the Grand Ducal Palace. The marriage ceremony of Julia and Ludwig has just taken place, and after Lisa has gone off weeping and Julia has explained how she will treat any rivals, the Baroness von Krakenfeldt enters in a fury, demanding that Rudolph be produced. Ludwig explains that Rudolph has been the loser in a Statutory Duel, whereupon the Baroness triumphantly reminds him that when he killed him he assumed all his responsibilities, of which she is the most overwhelming one. She leads him off to marry her, leaving Julia to her fading visions. The 'dead' Ernest now enters, curious to know what is going on. He meets Julia, who pretends to regard him as a ghost ; on hearing that she has been supplanted he asks her again to be his wife, but she refuses to be married to one legally dead for the next century. The Baroness's wedding procession enters, but as it does so there marches in the Prince of Monte Carlo with his suite of second-hand nobles and his daughter, to whom Rudolph was engaged in infancy

but since the impecunious Prince has never dared leave his house for fear of his dunning creditors the marriage has never taken place. Now he has invented Roulette and gained a fortune, and has at last brought his daughter to marry the Grand Duke; Ludwig thus finds himself with three Grand Duchesses on his hands. The Princess declares that since she has been engaged to him for the last twenty years and the Baroness only the last three weeks, surely she has prior claim. At this moment Rudolph, the Notary, and Ernest appear. "You didn't revive the law!" shouts Rudolph. "You are not Grand Duke! The Act laid it down that the Ace shall count as the lowest card, so *you* were the loser and are the ghost!"

As the law hasn't been revived and Ernest will come to life in about three minutes' time Julia's objection to marrying him falls to the ground, and she consents to become his wife. Rudolph turns his attentions to the Princess. As the clock strikes three Ludwig, now legally dead, comes to life, offers himself to Lisa, and all dance off to get married as the curtain falls.

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